

SARASWATI

As Brahma sinks into peaceful bliss, his radiance gives birth to a sublime form. Saraswati, the goddess of wisdom, emerges from Brahma's mind and enlightens the mighty creator.

When the all-consuming fire, Vadavagni, is raging through the world the gods go to Saraswati for help. Saraswati agrees to carry the fire and save everyone from perishing. Shiva aids her in this quest, and she begins her epic course as a river.

Later, Saraswati finds herself the victim of a terrible curse when she gets drawn into the rivalry between the sages Vishwamitra and Vasishtha. Amar Chitra Katha follows the story of Saraswati, from her birth to her journey into the ocean.

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- NARAYAN MURTHY, CHIEF MENTOR, INFOSYS

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SARASWATI

STORIES OF THE GODDESS OF WISDOM

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THE BIRTH OF SARASWATI

BRAHMA SAT ON HIS LOTUS IN DEEP MEDITATION.

PAKIMALA T.V

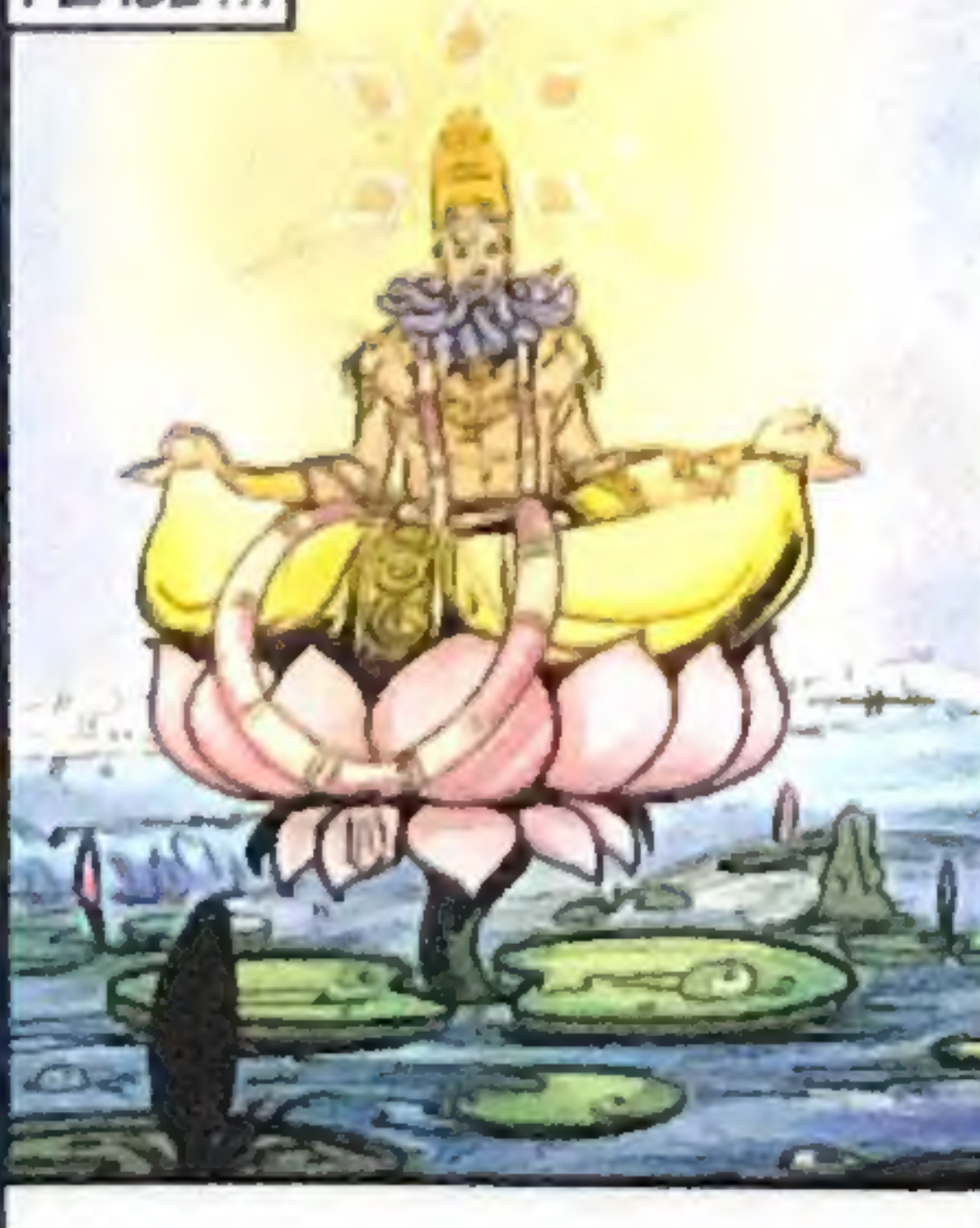
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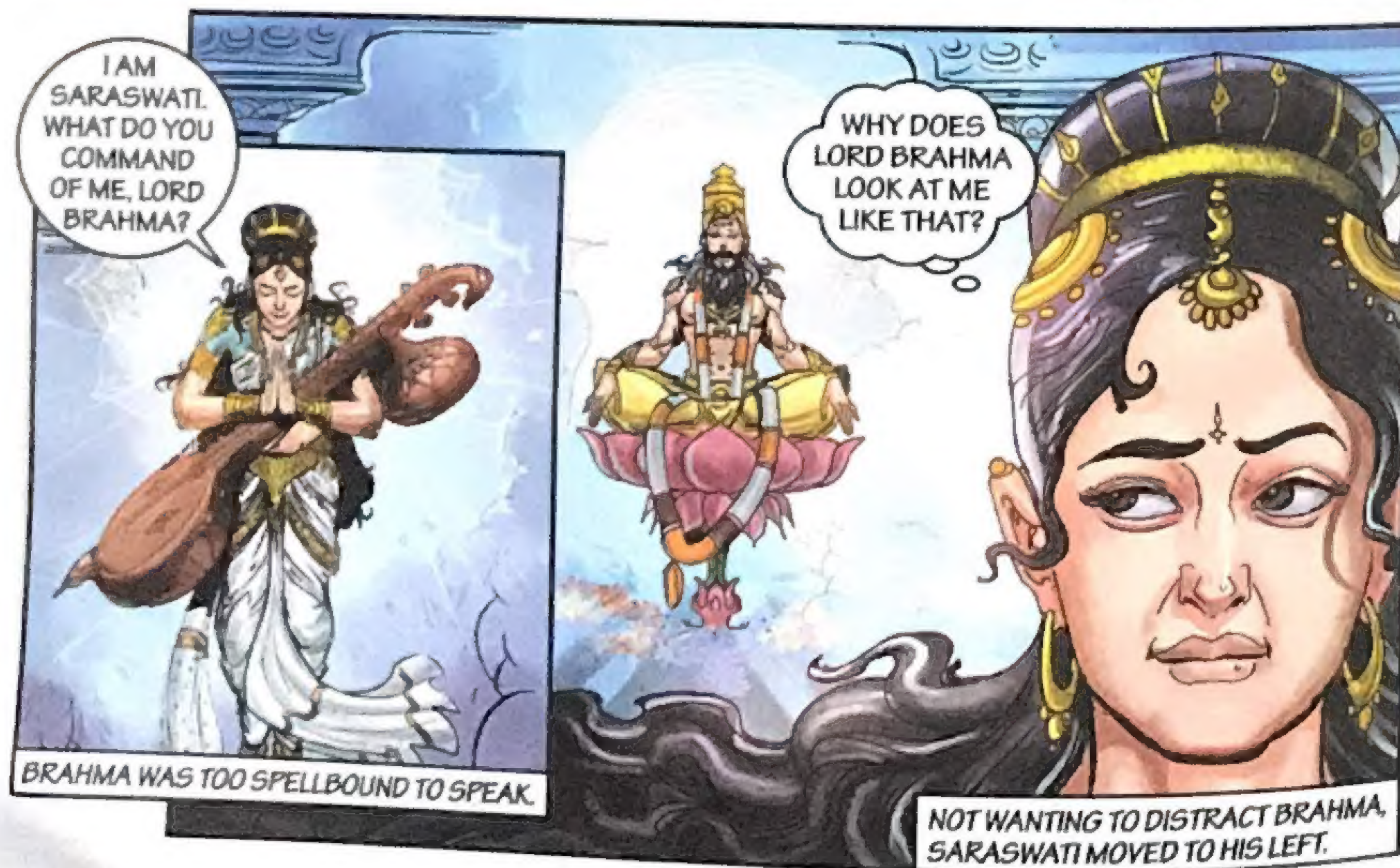
OM...

HE HAD JUST COMPLETED THE
CREATION OF THE THREE WORLDS.

AS HIS MIND SANK INTO COMPLETE
PEACE ...

...THERE EMERGED FROM IT...







ANNOYED AND UPSET, SARASWATI TURNED TO SHIVA FOR HELP.

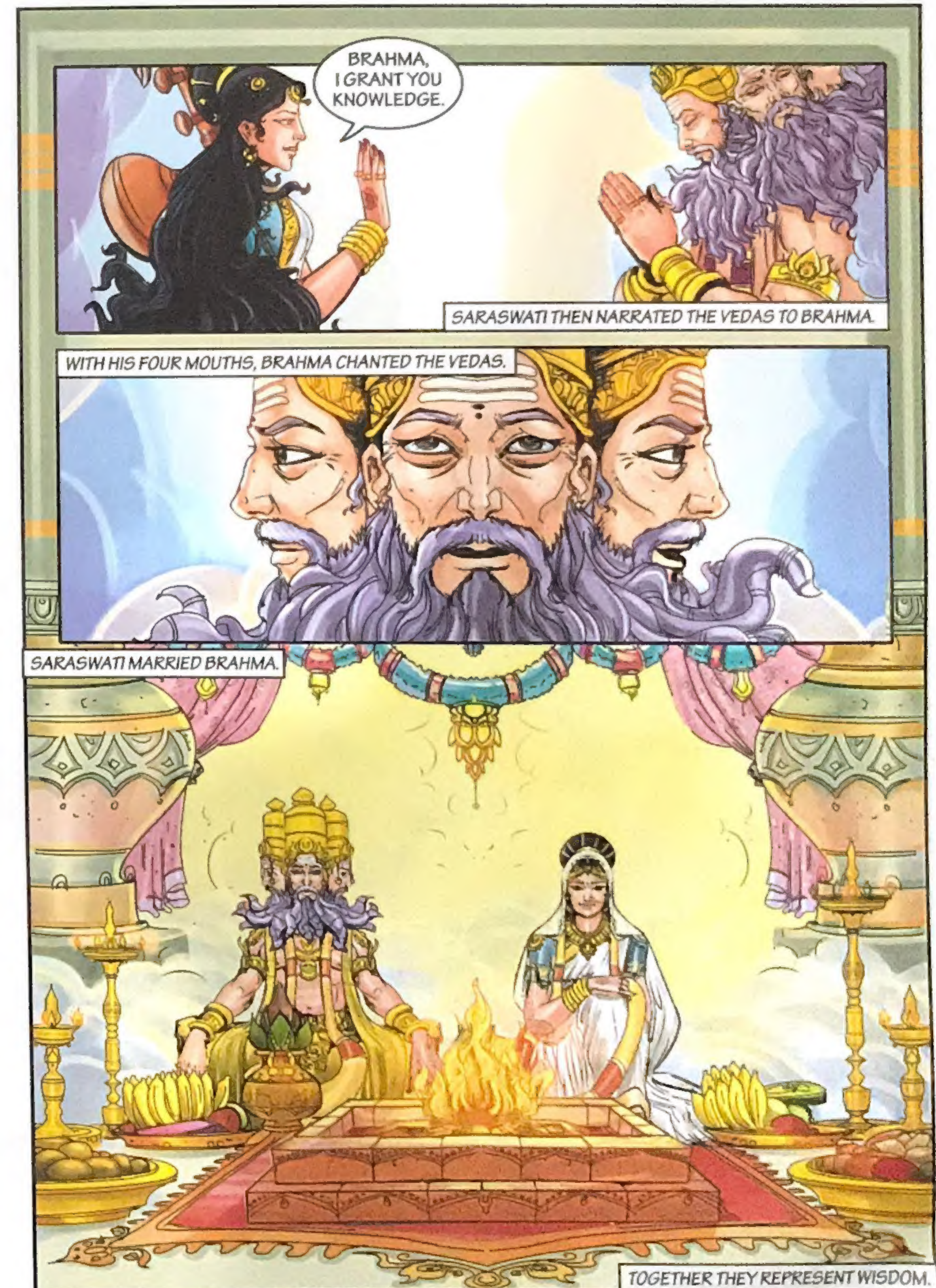
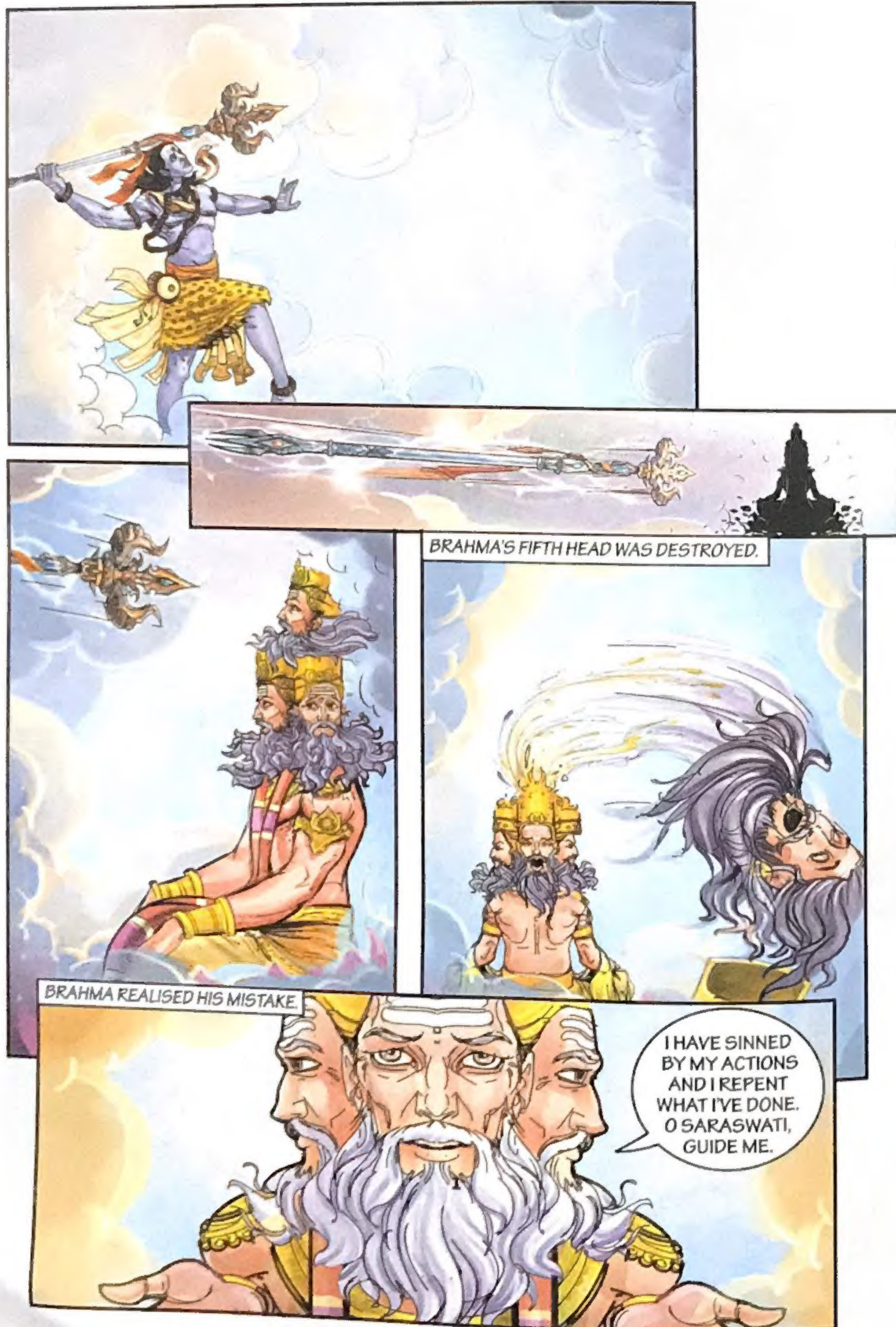


SHIVA APPEARED BEFORE SARASWATI -



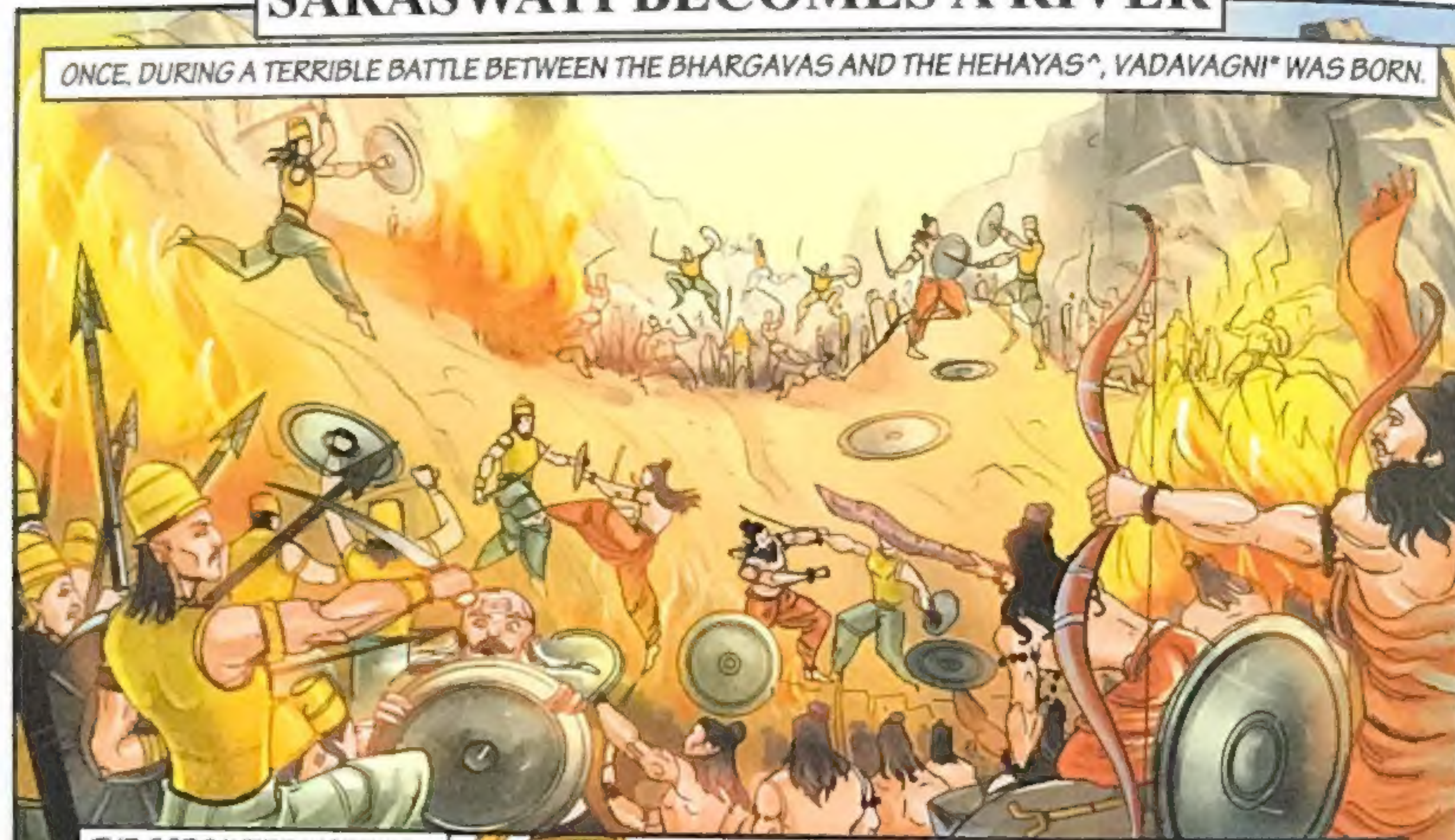
SHIVA AIMED HIS TRIDENT AT BRAHMA'S FIFTH HEAD.





SARASWATI BECOMES A RIVER

ONCE, DURING A TERRIBLE BATTLE BETWEEN THE BHARGAVAS AND THE HEHAYAS*, VADAVAGNI* WAS BORN.



THE GODS WERE WORRIED -



SARASWATI CAN HELP US. YOU SHOULD GO TO HER IMMEDIATELY.



*THE BRAHMINS AND THE KSHATRIYAS



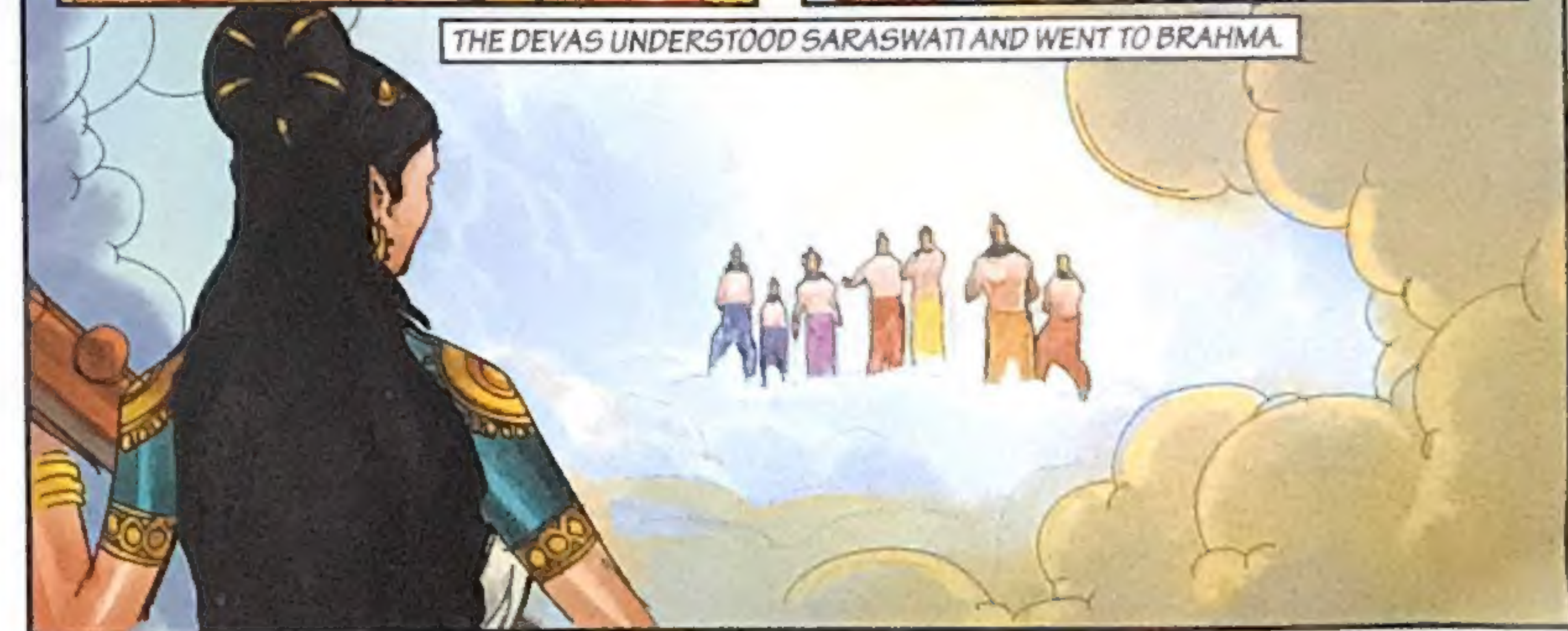
*ALL-CONSUMING FIRE, THAT DESTROYS EVERYTHING IN ITS WAY

SARASWATI

THE GODS WENT TO SARASWATI.

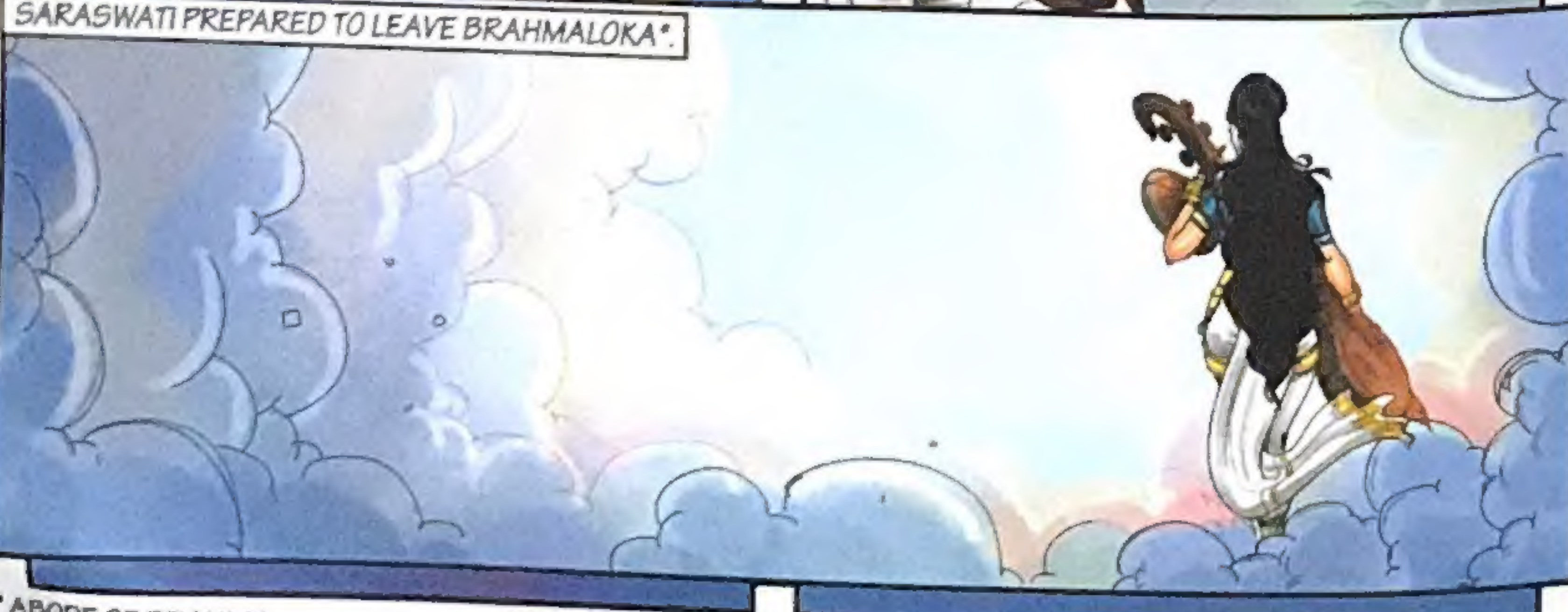


THE DEVAS UNDERSTOOD SARASWATI AND WENT TO BRAHMA.



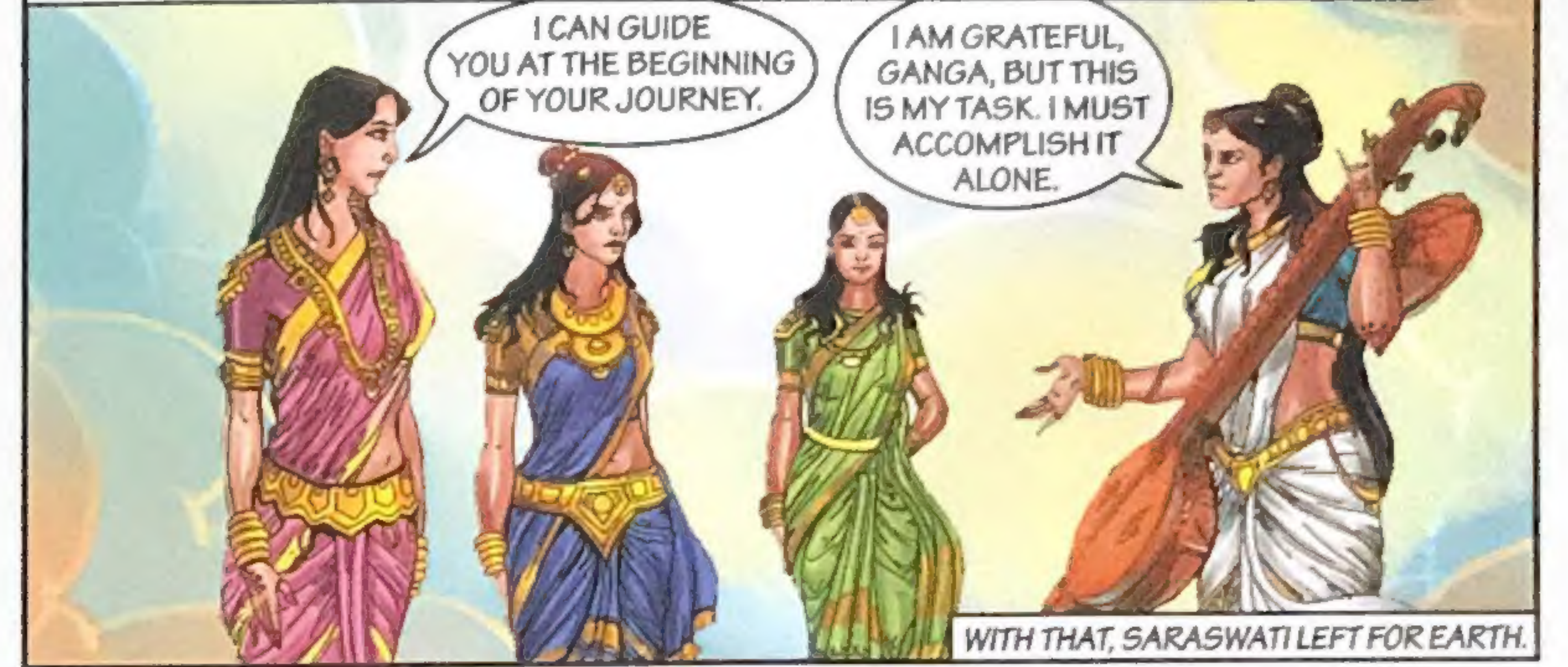


SARASWATI PREPARED TO LEAVE BRAHMALOKA*



*ABODE OF BRAHMA

AS SARASWATI WAS LEAVING, THE GODDESSES GANGA, YAMUNA AND GAYATRI* CAME TO SEE HER.



SHE ARRIVED AT THE ASHRAM OF SAGE UTTANKA...



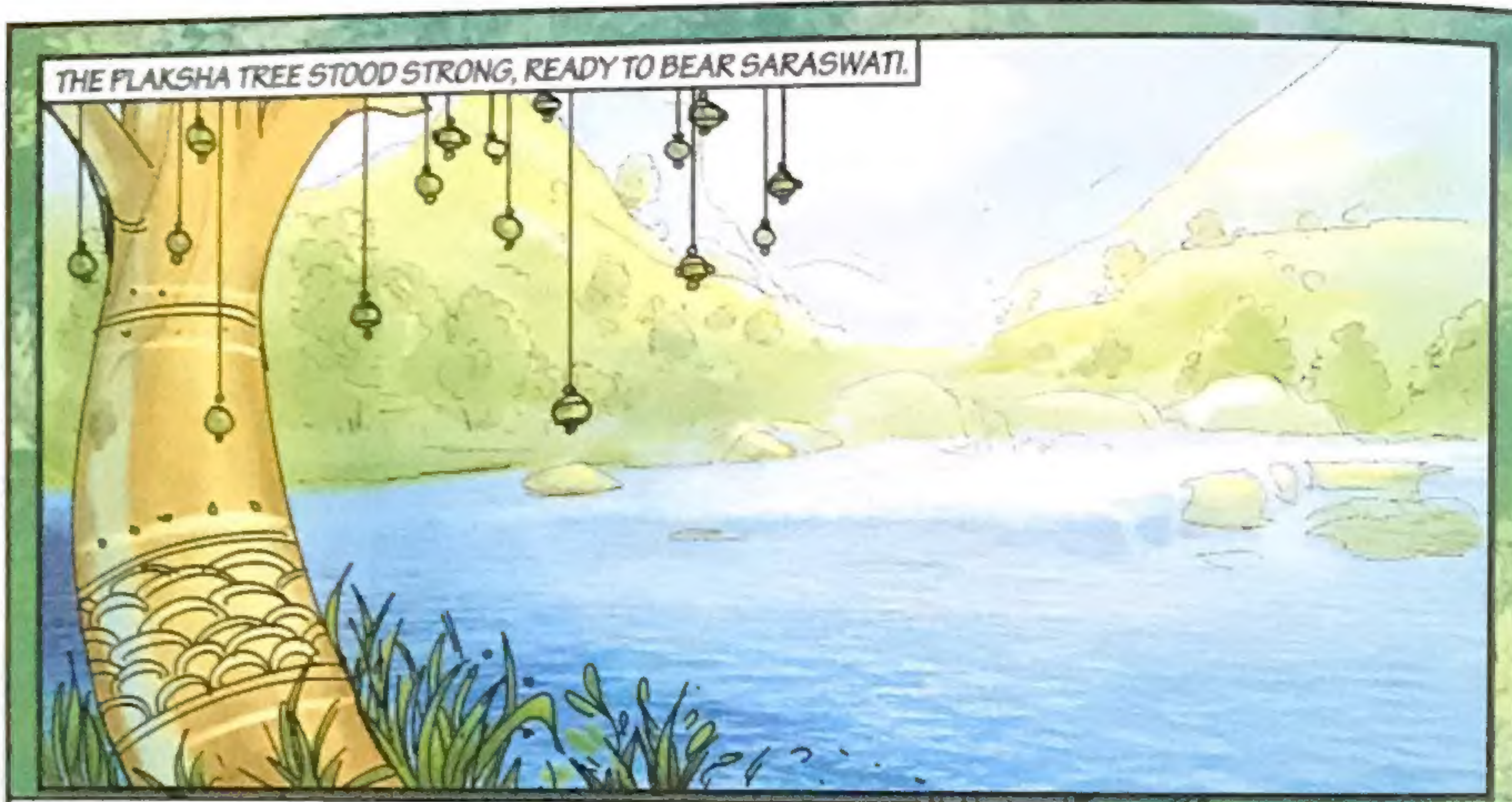
...WHERE SHE MET SHIVA.



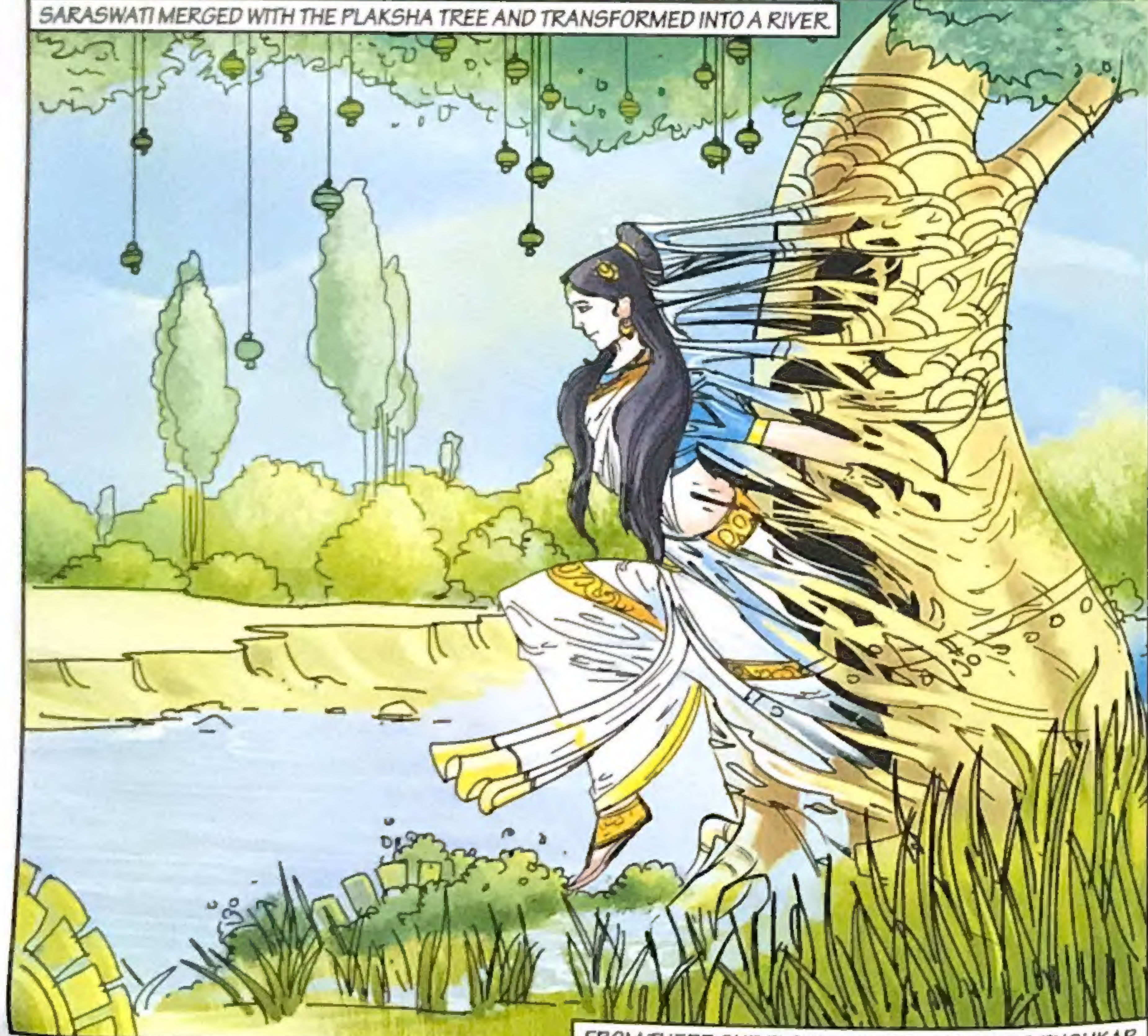
*THE GODDESS REPRESENTING THE SACRED GAYATRI CHANT

^THE SACRED FIG TREE

THE PLAKSHA TREE STOOD STRONG, READY TO BEAR SARASWATI.



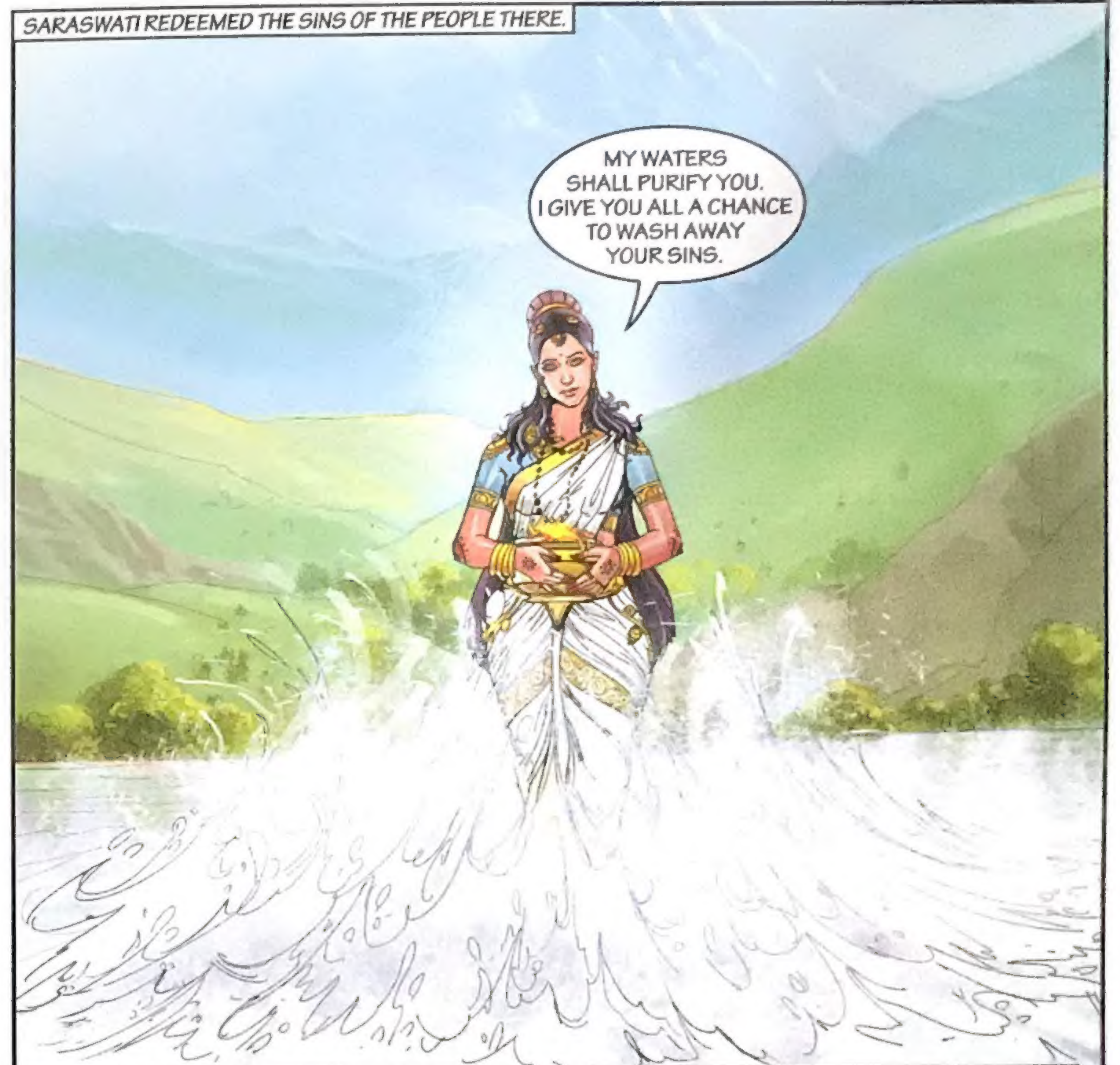
SARASWATI MERGED WITH THE PLAKSHA TREE AND TRANSFORMED INTO A RIVER.



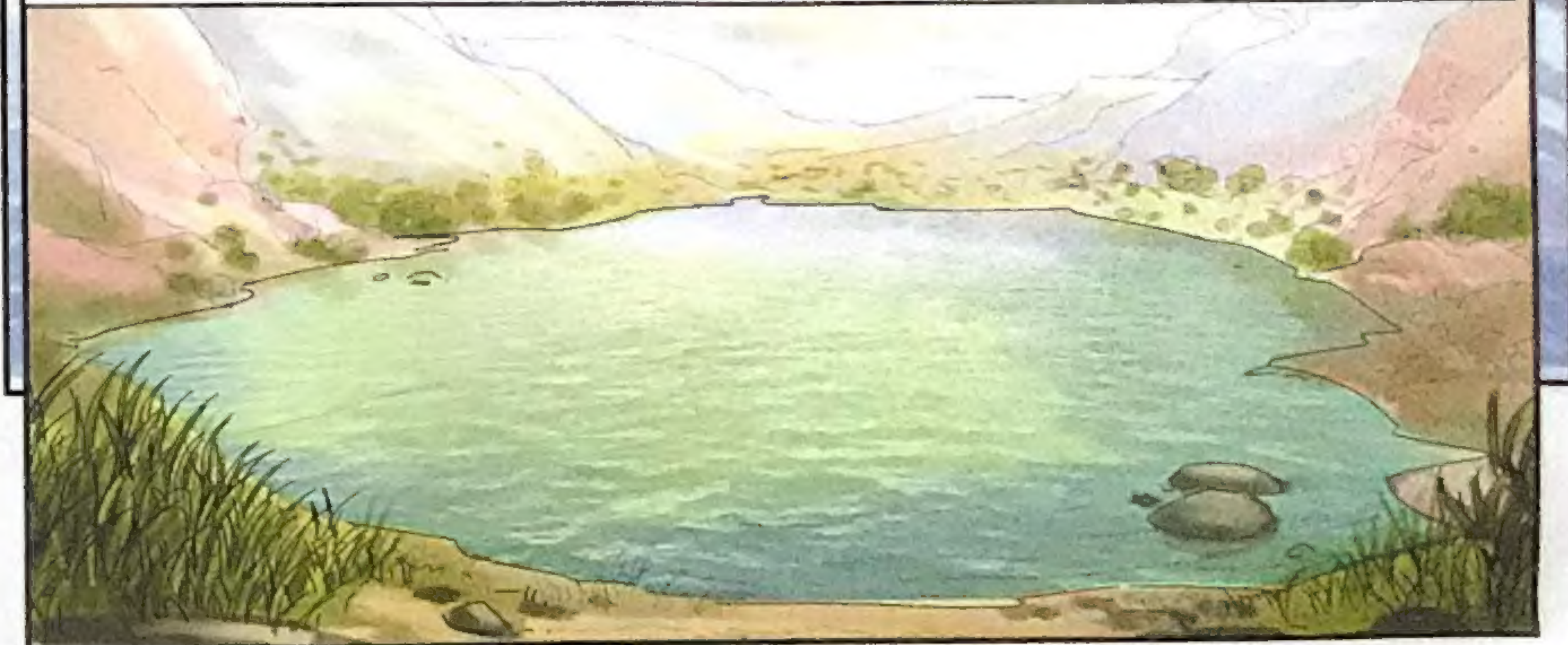
FROM THERE SHE FLOWED NORTH, TOWARDS PUSHKAR.

SARASWATI REDEEMED THE SINS OF THE PEOPLE THERE.

MY WATERS
SHALL PURIFY YOU.
I GIVE YOU ALL A CHANCE
TO WASH AWAY
YOUR SINS.



IT IS BELIEVED TO THIS DAY THAT ANYONE WHO DRINKS THE WATER AT PUSHKAR WILL ATTAIN BRAHMALOKA.

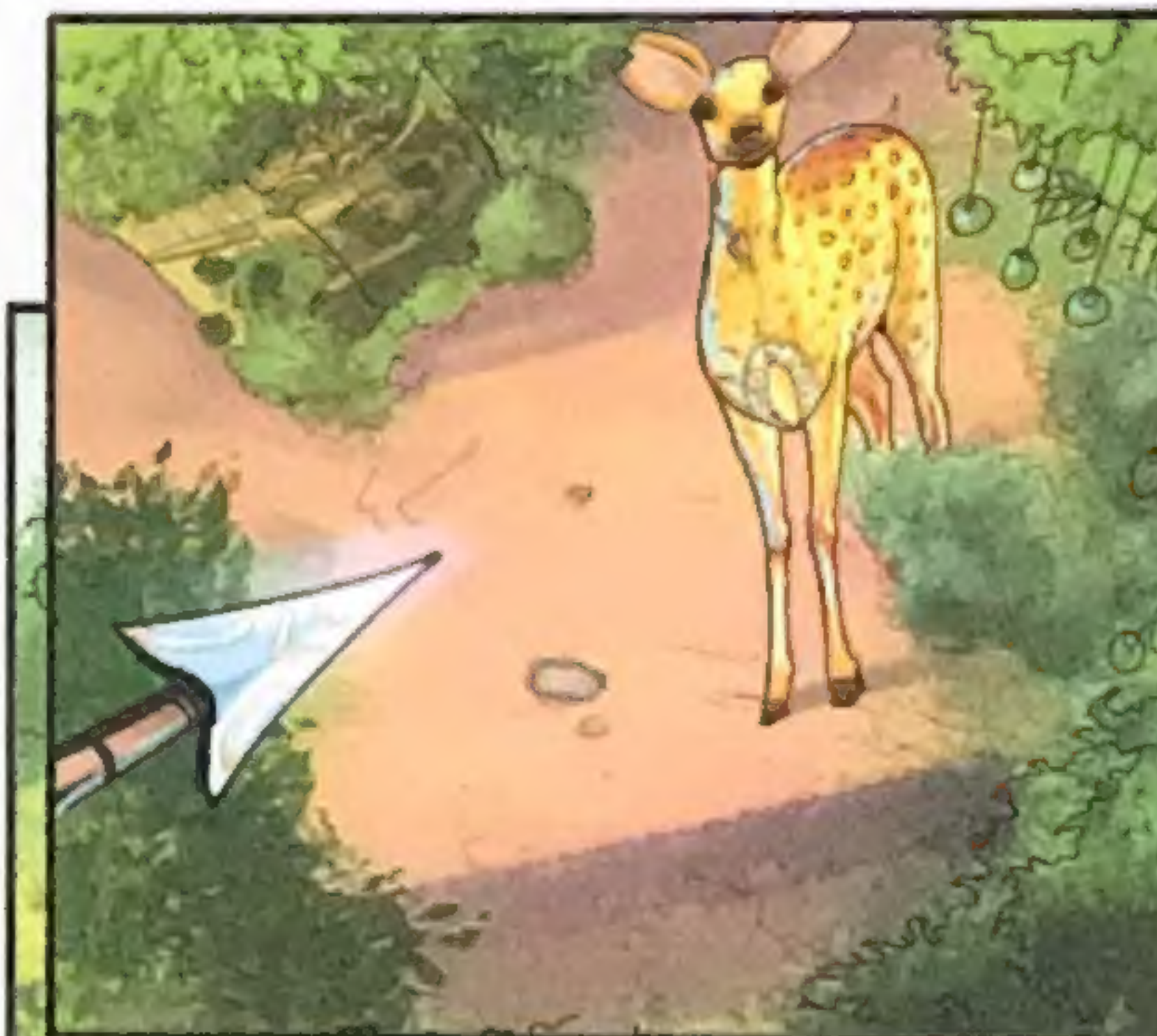
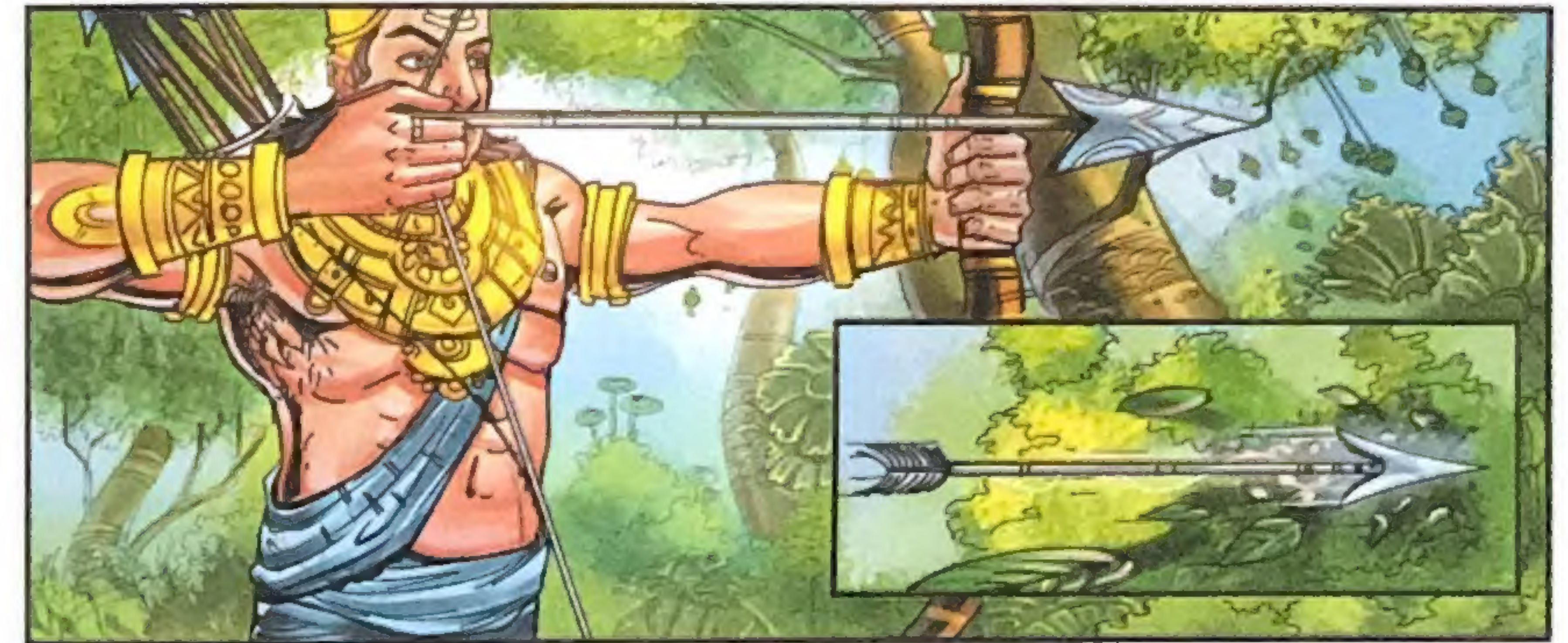
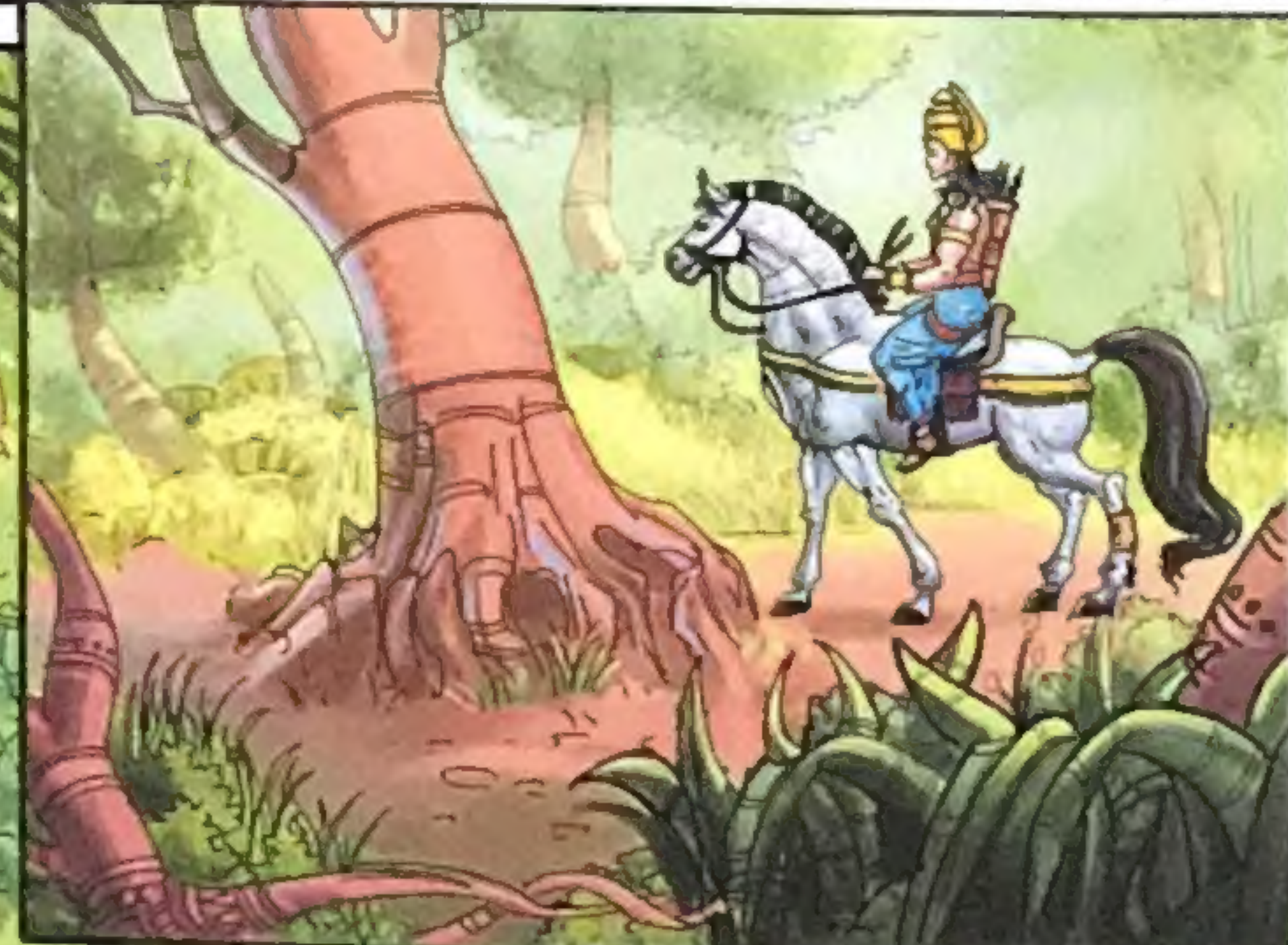


FROM PUSHKAR, SARASWATI FLOWED WEST AND REACHED A PLACE WHERE SHE CAME TO BE KNOWN AS NANDA.



THE STORY ABOUT WHY SHE WAS CALLED NANDA GOES LIKE THIS: ONCE UPON A TIME THERE WAS A KING CALLED PRABHANJANA.

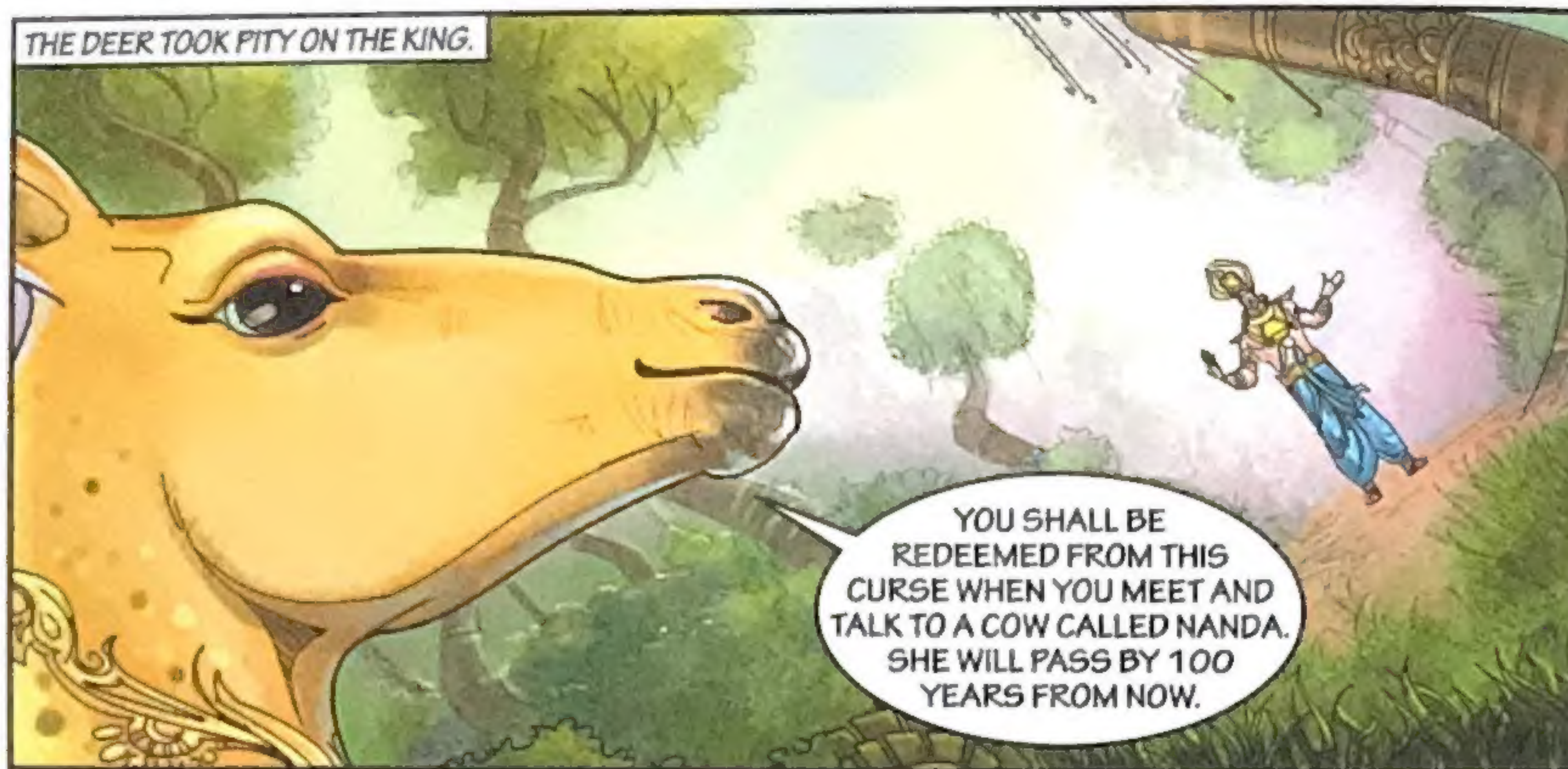
WHILE HE WAS OUT ON ONE OF HIS HUNTING TRIPS -



WHEN KING PRABHANJANA WENT TO CLAIM HIS KILL -



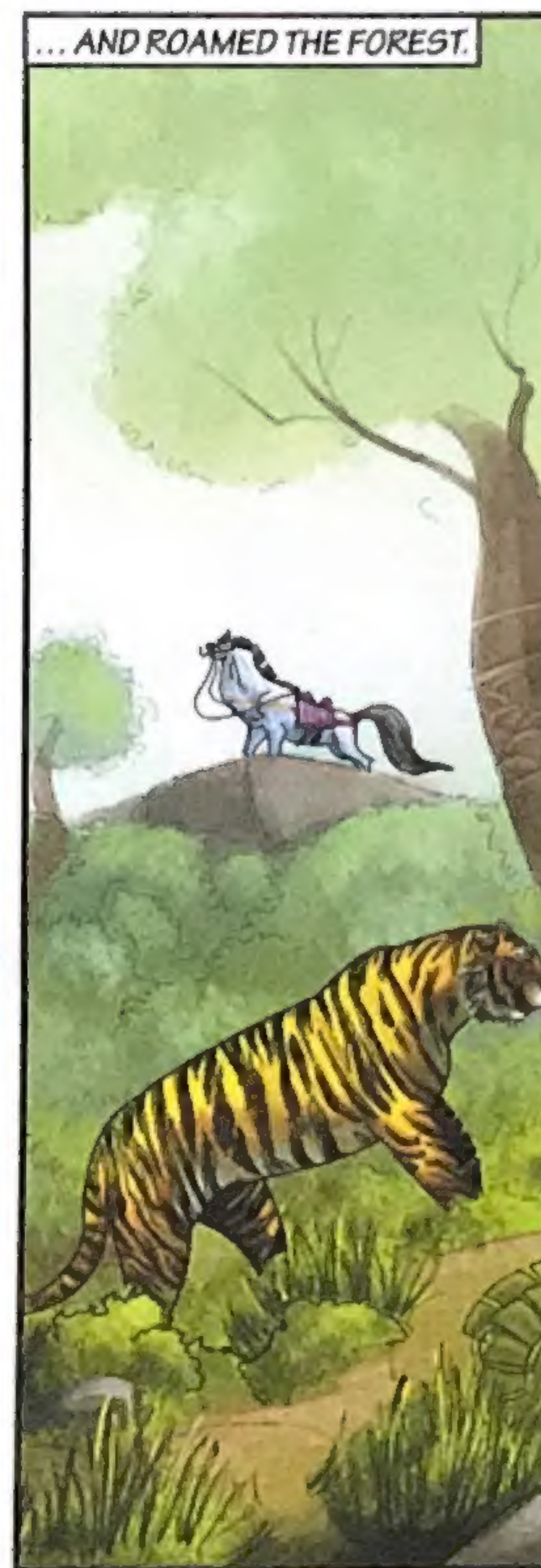
THE DEER TOOK PITY ON THE KING.



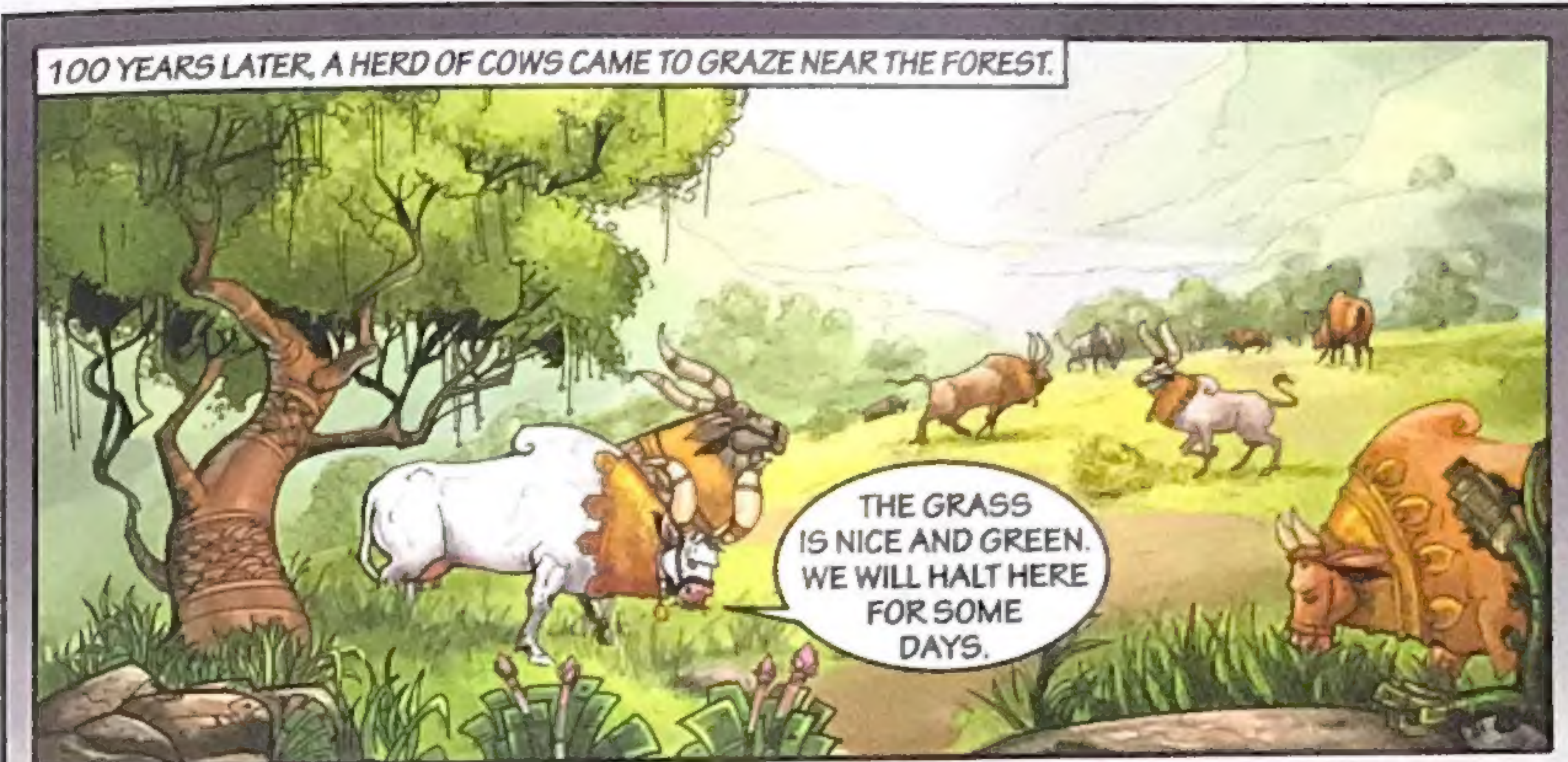
THE KING THEN TURNED INTO A TIGER...



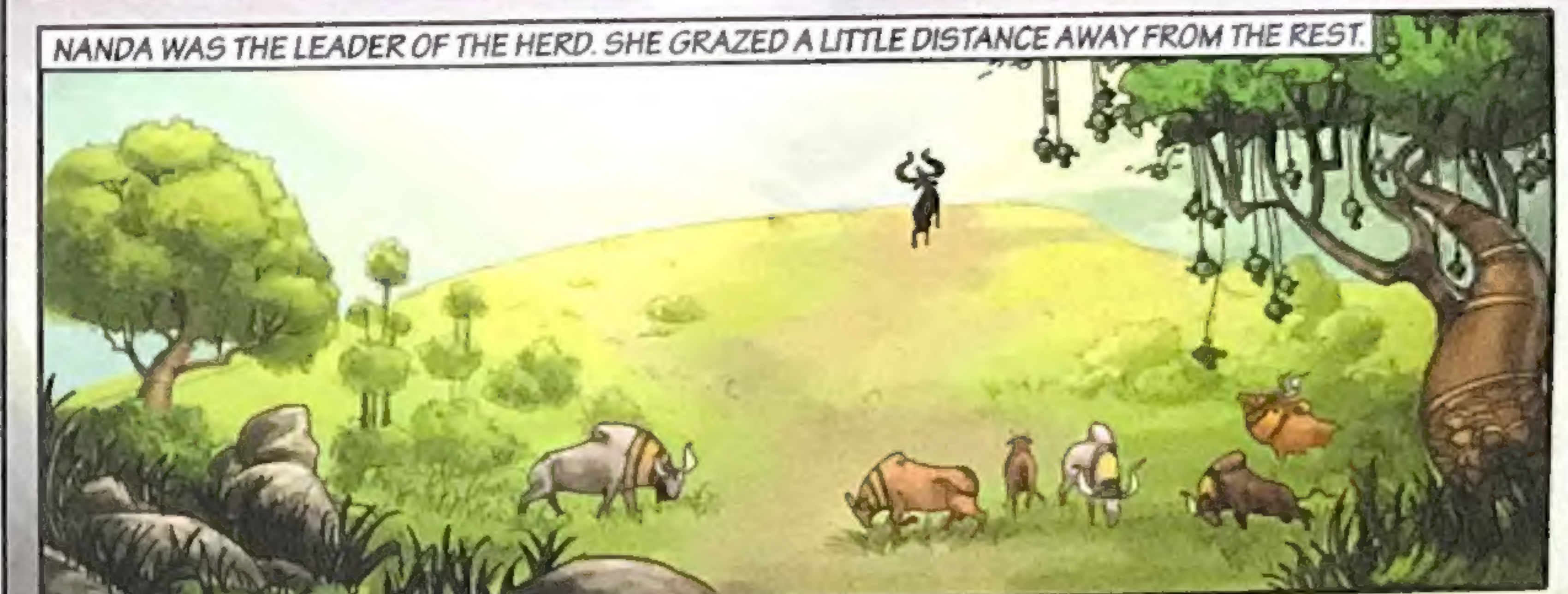
... AND ROAMED THE FOREST.



100 YEARS LATER, A HERD OF COWS CAME TO GRAZE NEAR THE FOREST.



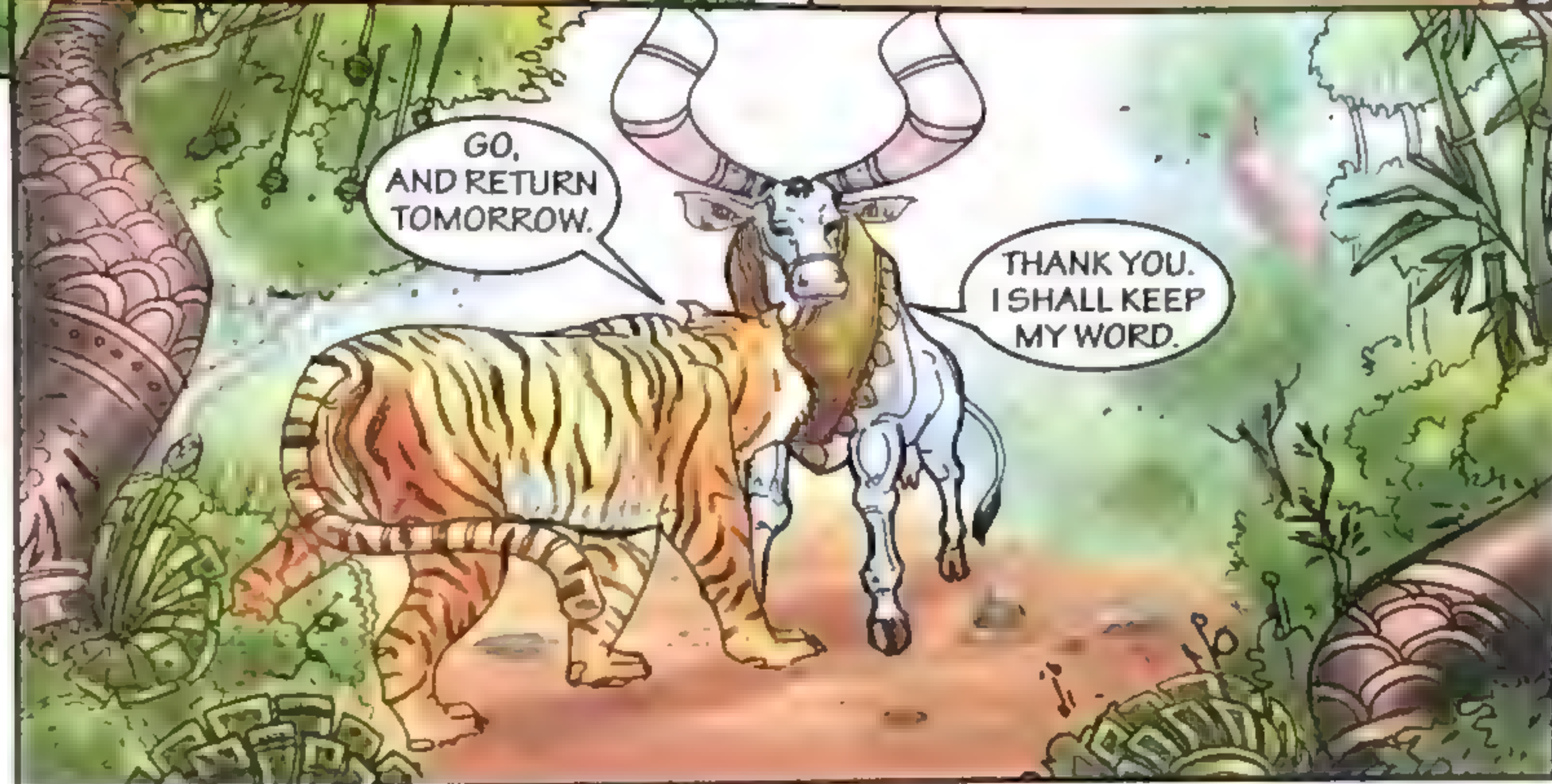
NANDA WAS THE LEADER OF THE HERD. SHE GRAZED A LITTLE DISTANCE AWAY FROM THE REST.



WITHOUT REALISING, NANDA STRAYED AWAY.



AS NANDA TURNED TO LEAVE -



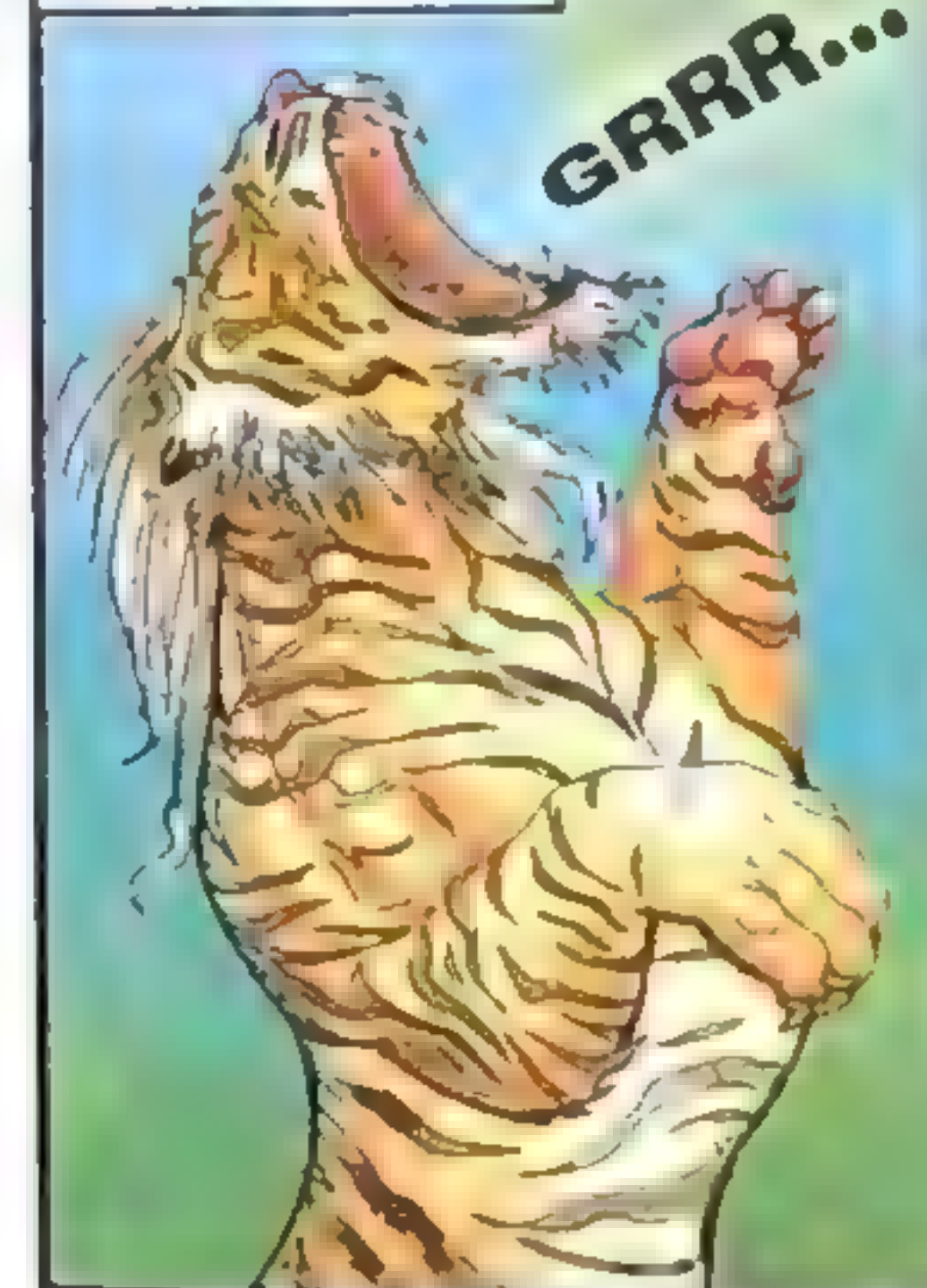
THE NEXT DAY -



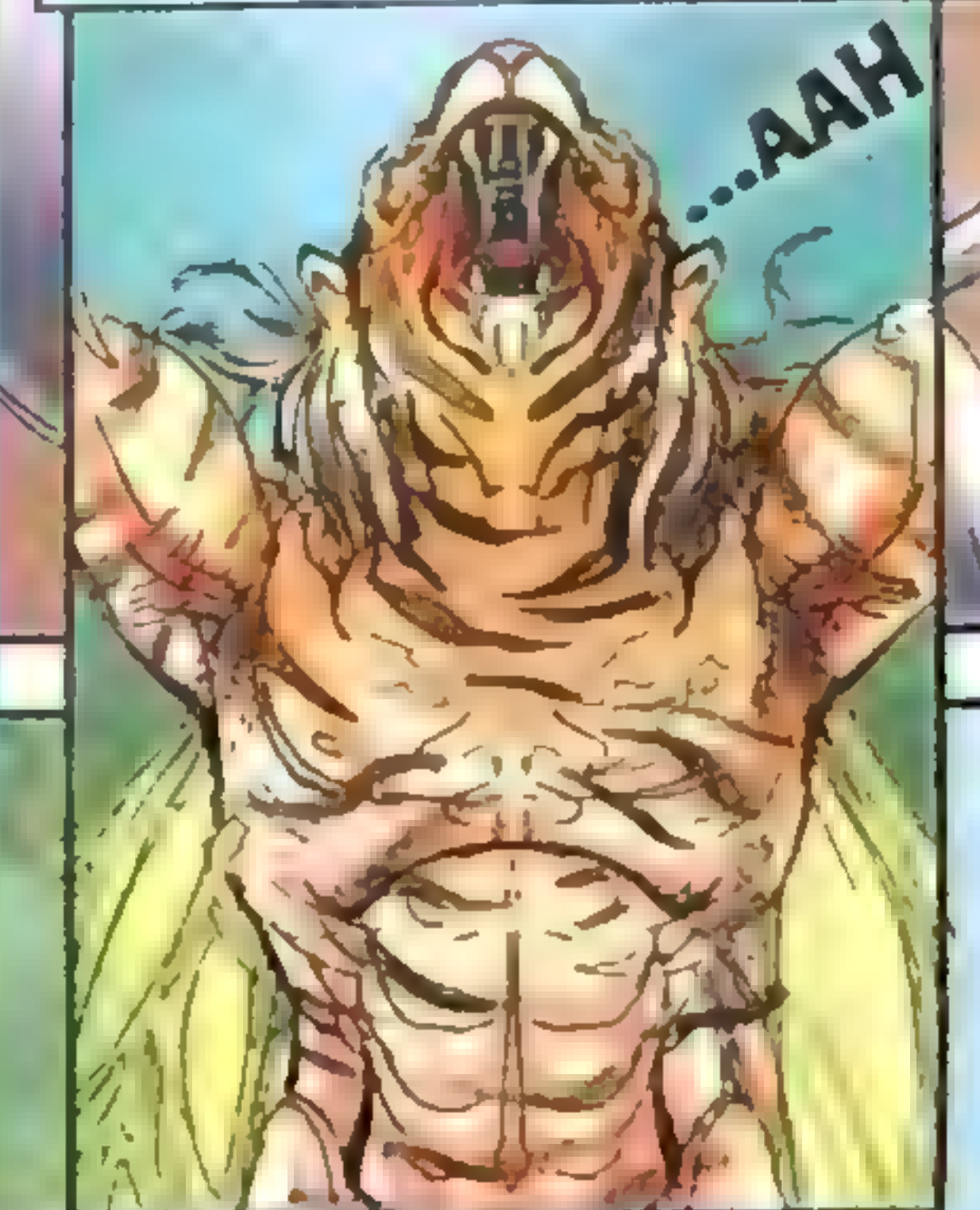
THE TIGER WAS SURPRISED BY NANDA'S HONESTY.



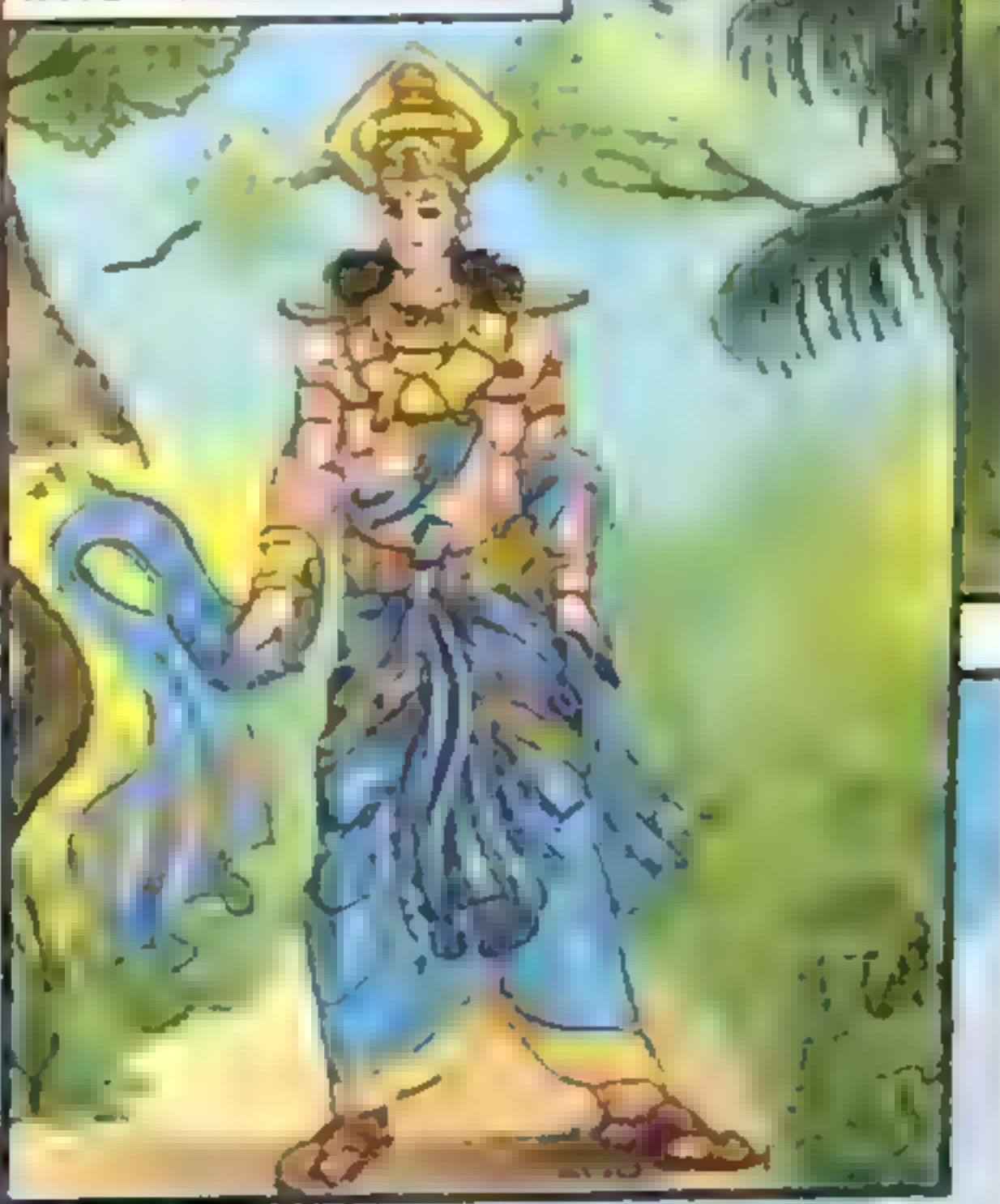
THE MOMENT NANDA SPOKE THOSE WORDS



... THE DEER'S CURSE WAS BROKEN...



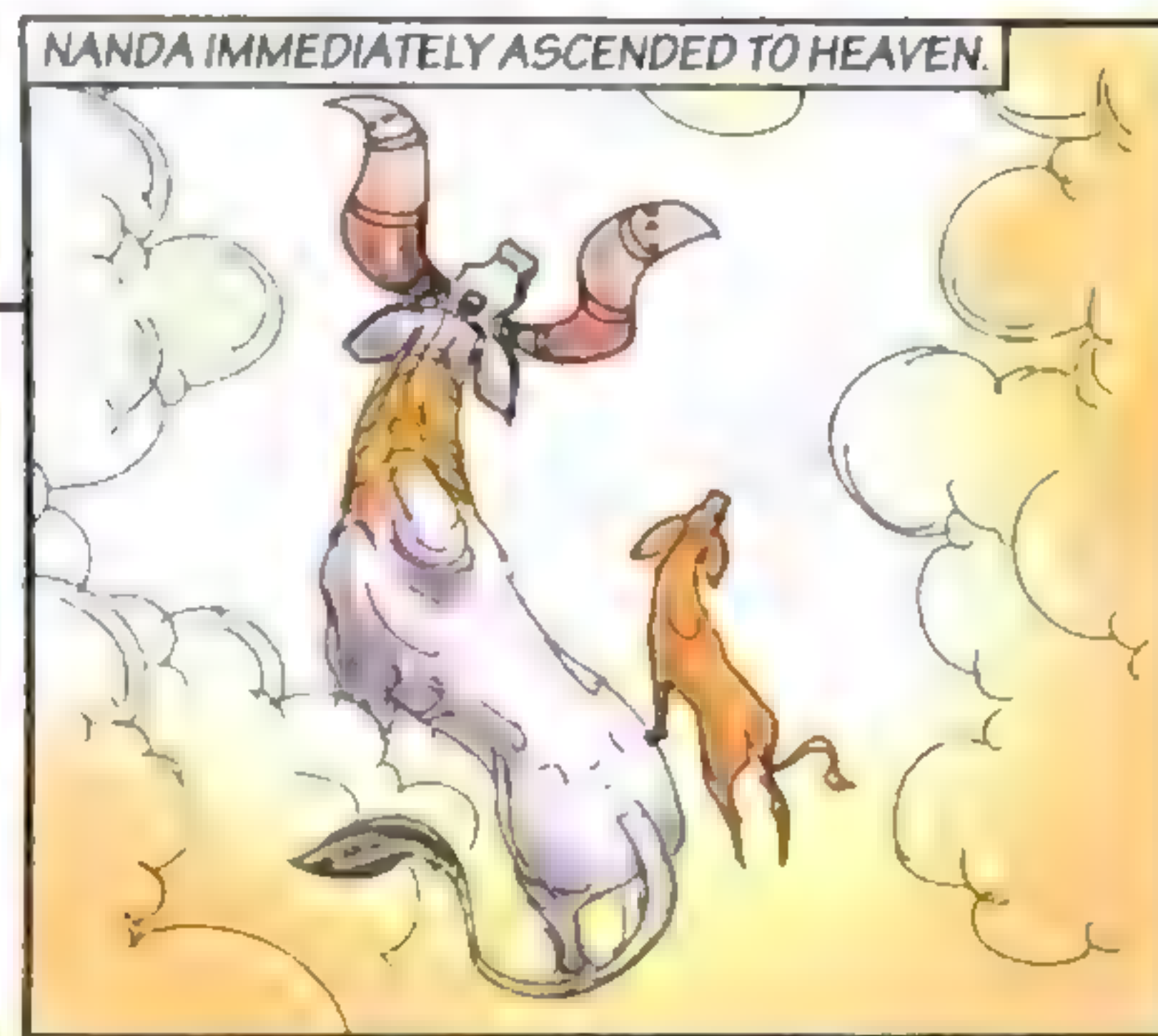
... AND THE TIGER TURNED BACK INTO PRABHANJANA



DHARMA DEVA* APPEARED BEFORE NANDA -



*ALSO KNOWN AS YAMA, THE GOD OF DEATH



SARASWATI IS KNOWN AS NANDA, EVEN TODAY.



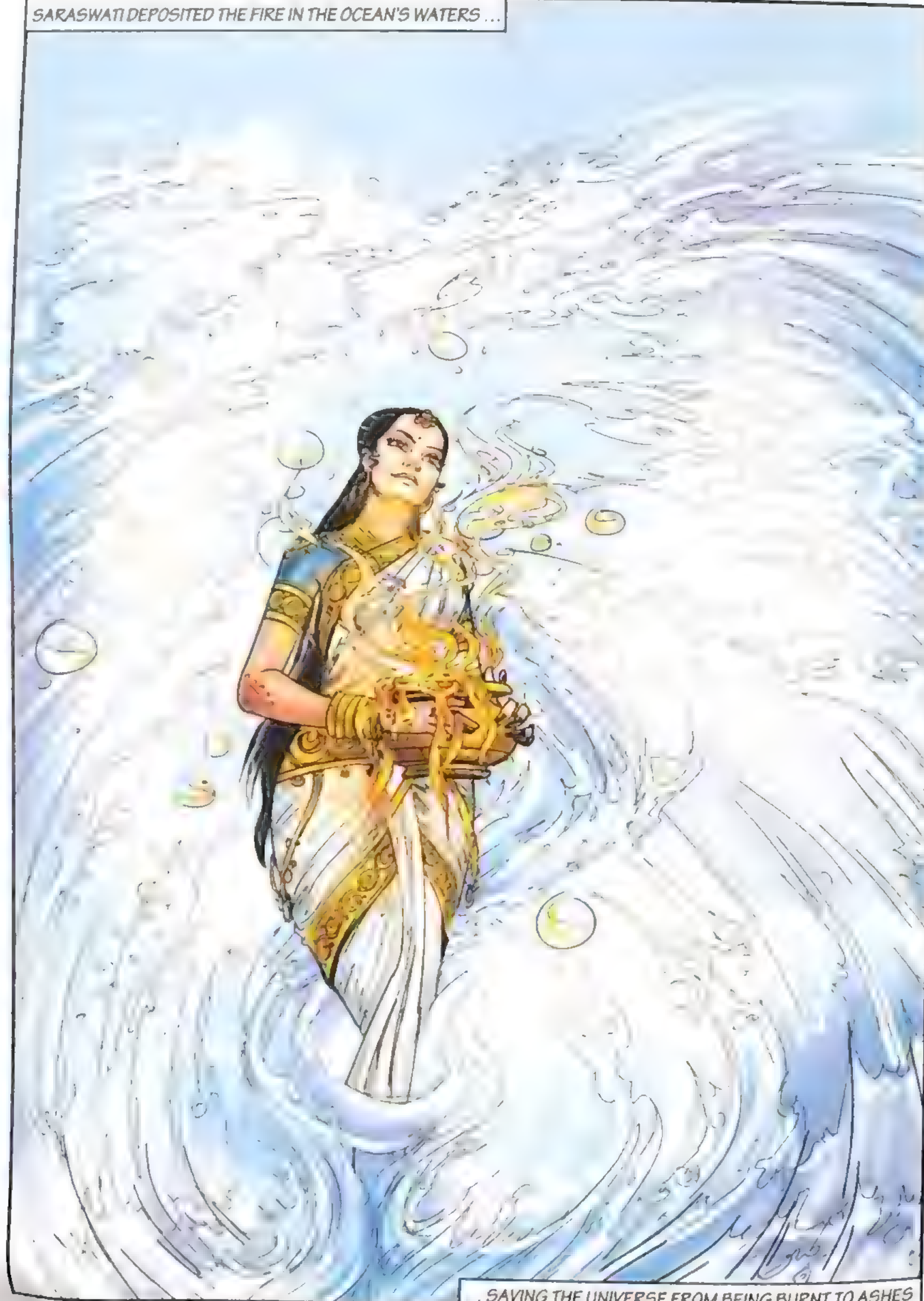
SARASWATI TURNED NORTH AGAIN AND FLOWED TOWARDS THE OCEAN.



THE GODS WATCHED FROM ABOVE AS SARASWATI REACHED THE END OF HER JOURNEY.



SARASWATI DEPOSITED THE FIRE IN THE OCEAN'S WATERS ...

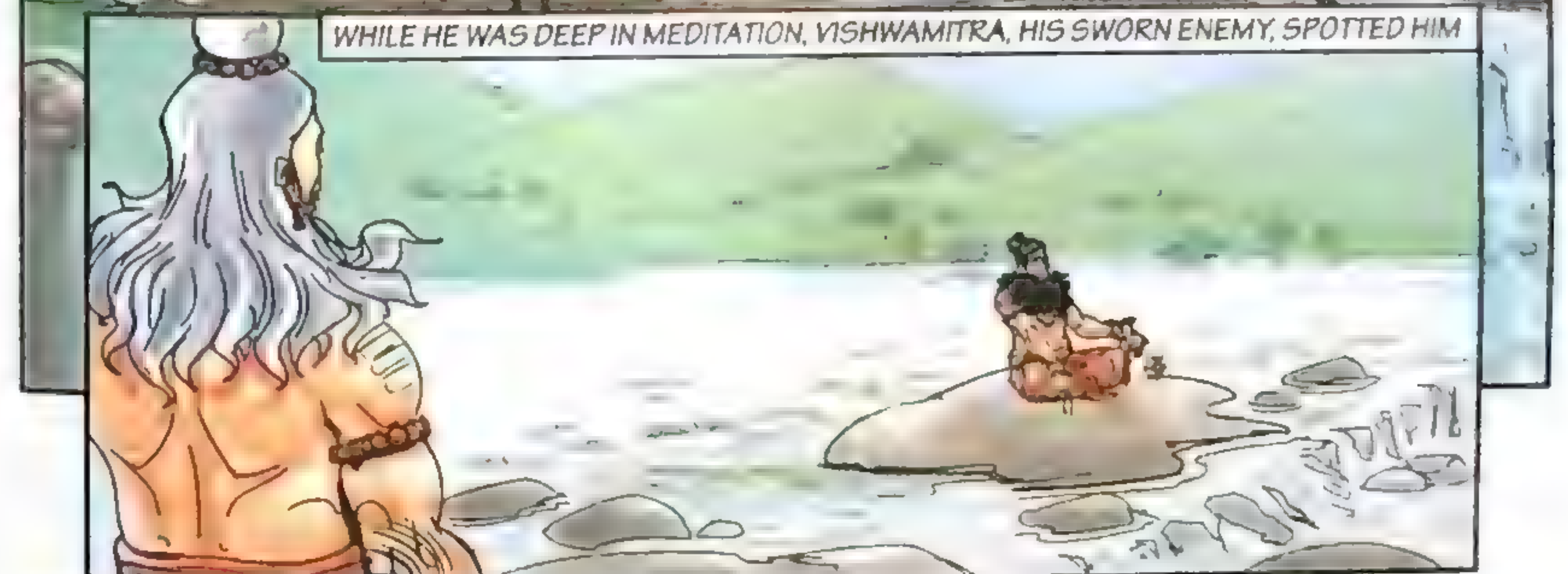


... SAVING THE UNIVERSE FROM BEING BURNT TO ASHES

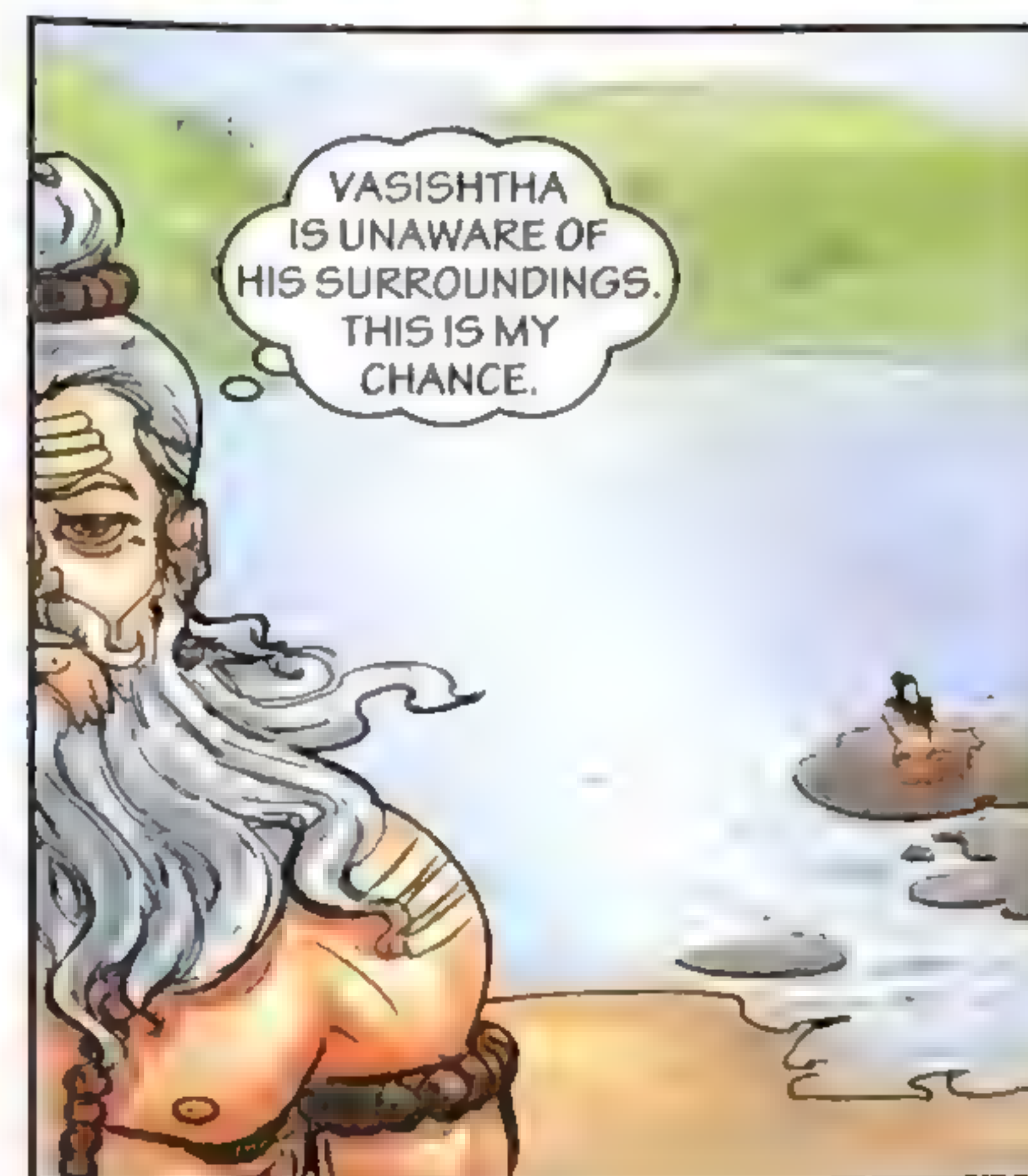
THE RIVER OF BLOOD



ONCE, THE GREAT SAGE VASISHTHA SAT ON THE BANKS OF THE SARASWATI, PERFORMING PENANCE.



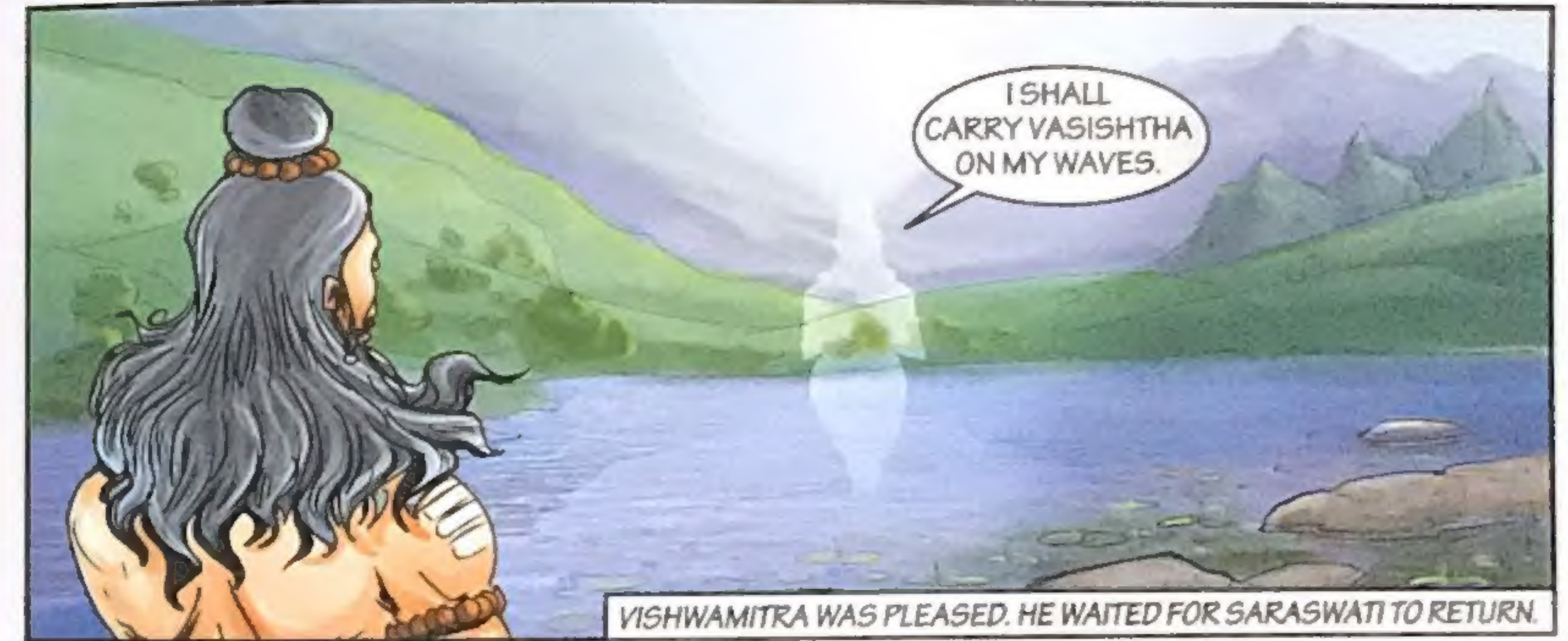
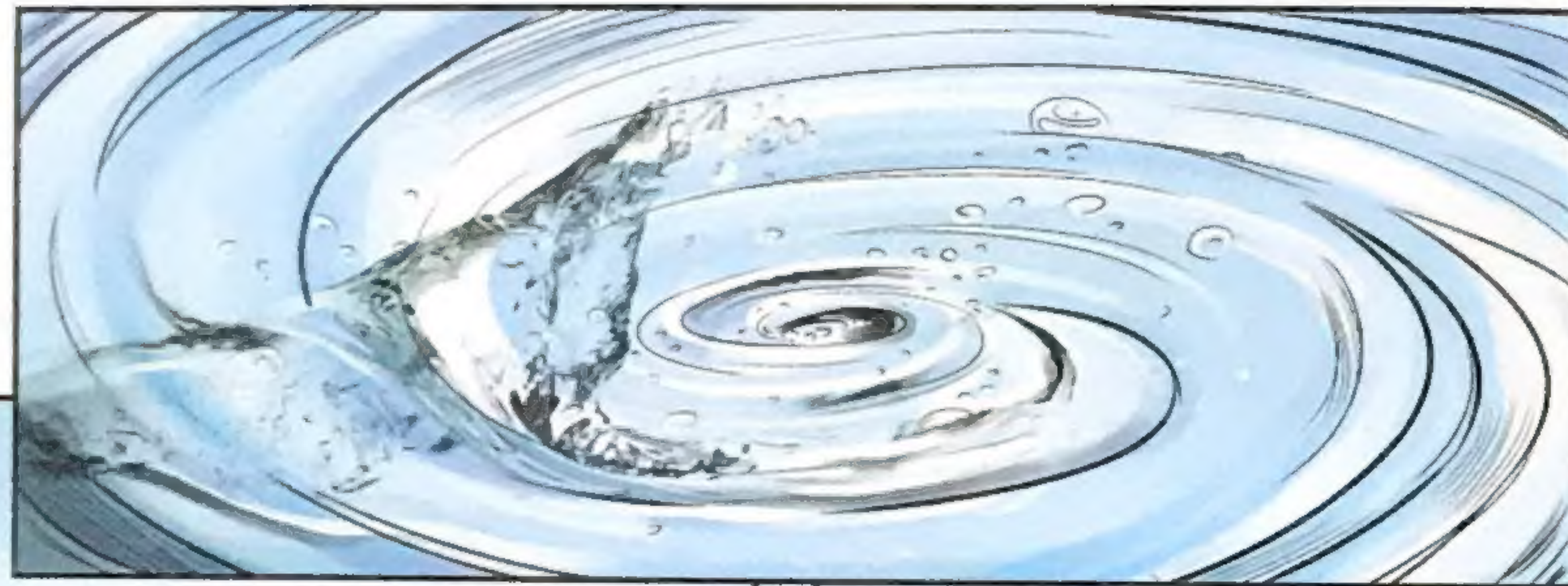
WHILE HE WAS DEEP IN MEDITATION, VISHWAMITRA, HIS SWORN ENEMY, SPOTTED HIM

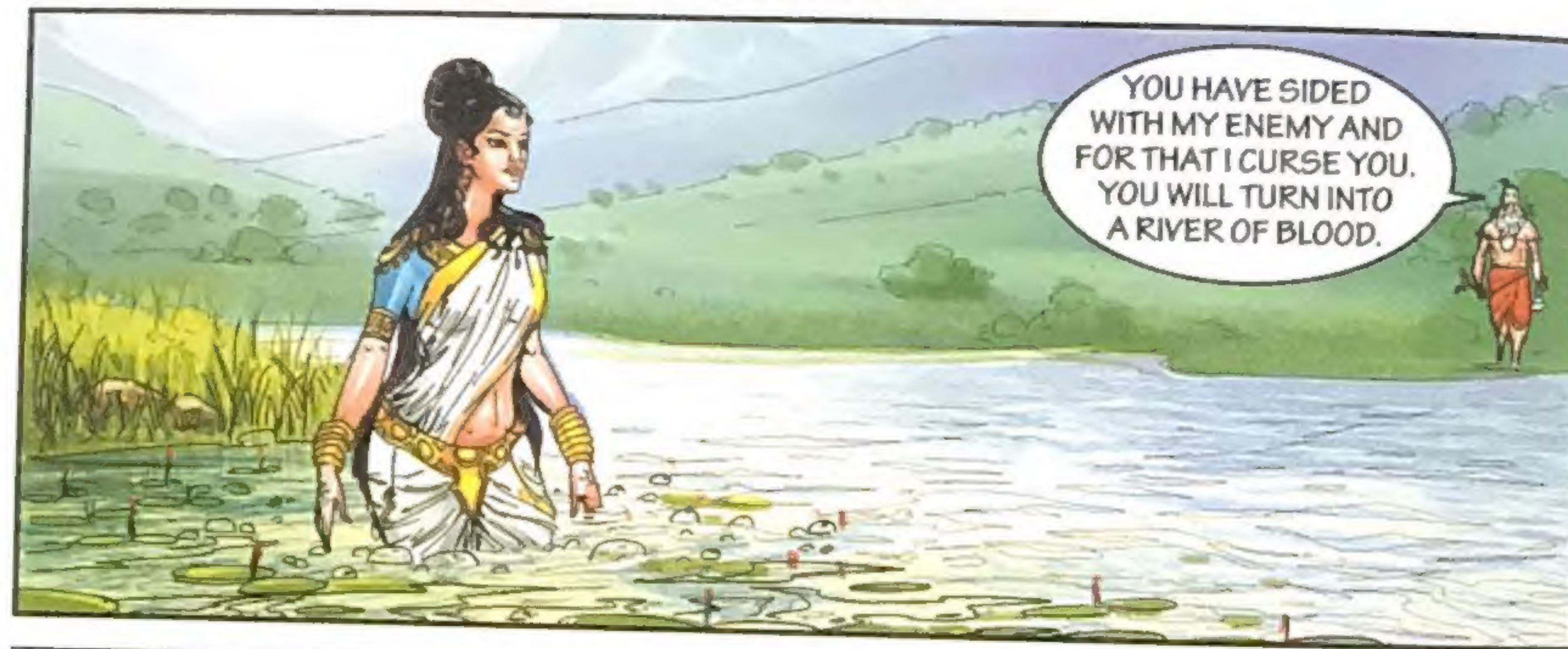


VASISHTHA IS UNAWARE OF HIS SURROUNDINGS. THIS IS MY CHANCE.



O SARASWATI, I, SAGE VISHWAMITRA, CALL UPON YOU





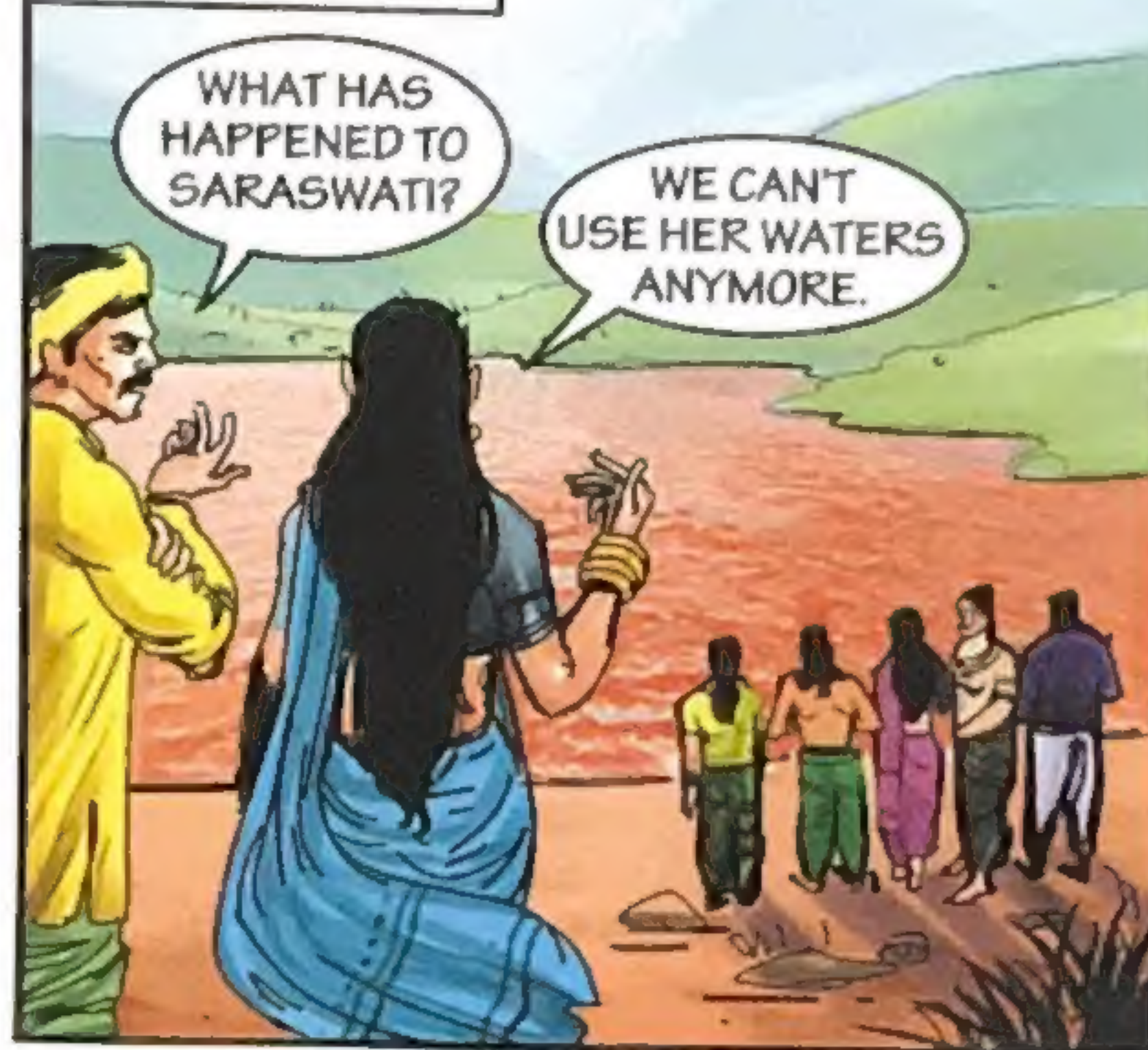
VISHWAMITRA WALKED AWAY ANGRILY.



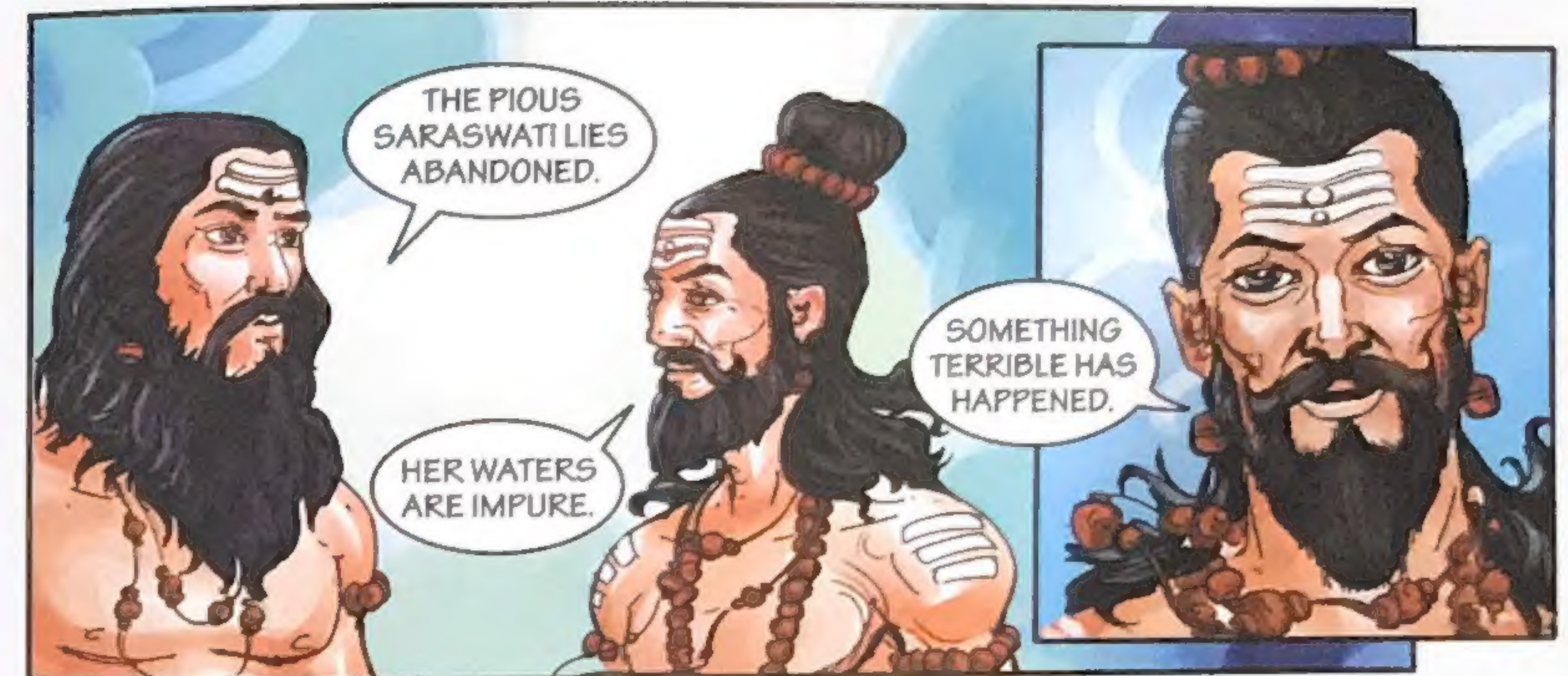
PEOPLE KEPT AWAY FROM SARASWATI'S WATERS.



THE NEXT MORNING -



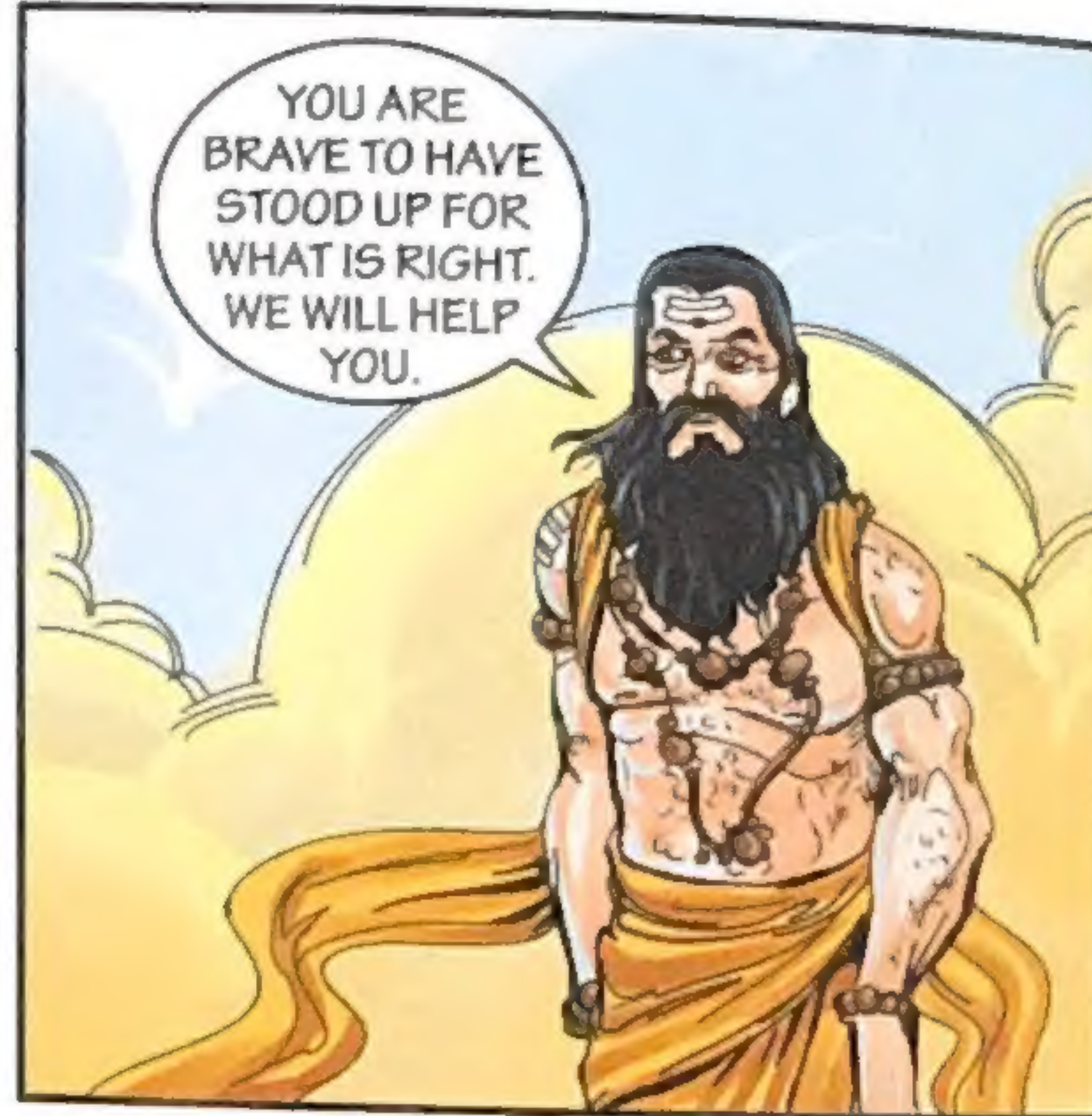
ONE DAY, A GROUP OF SAGES PASSED BY.



THE SAGES LISTENED TO HER AS SHE NARRATED HER STORY.



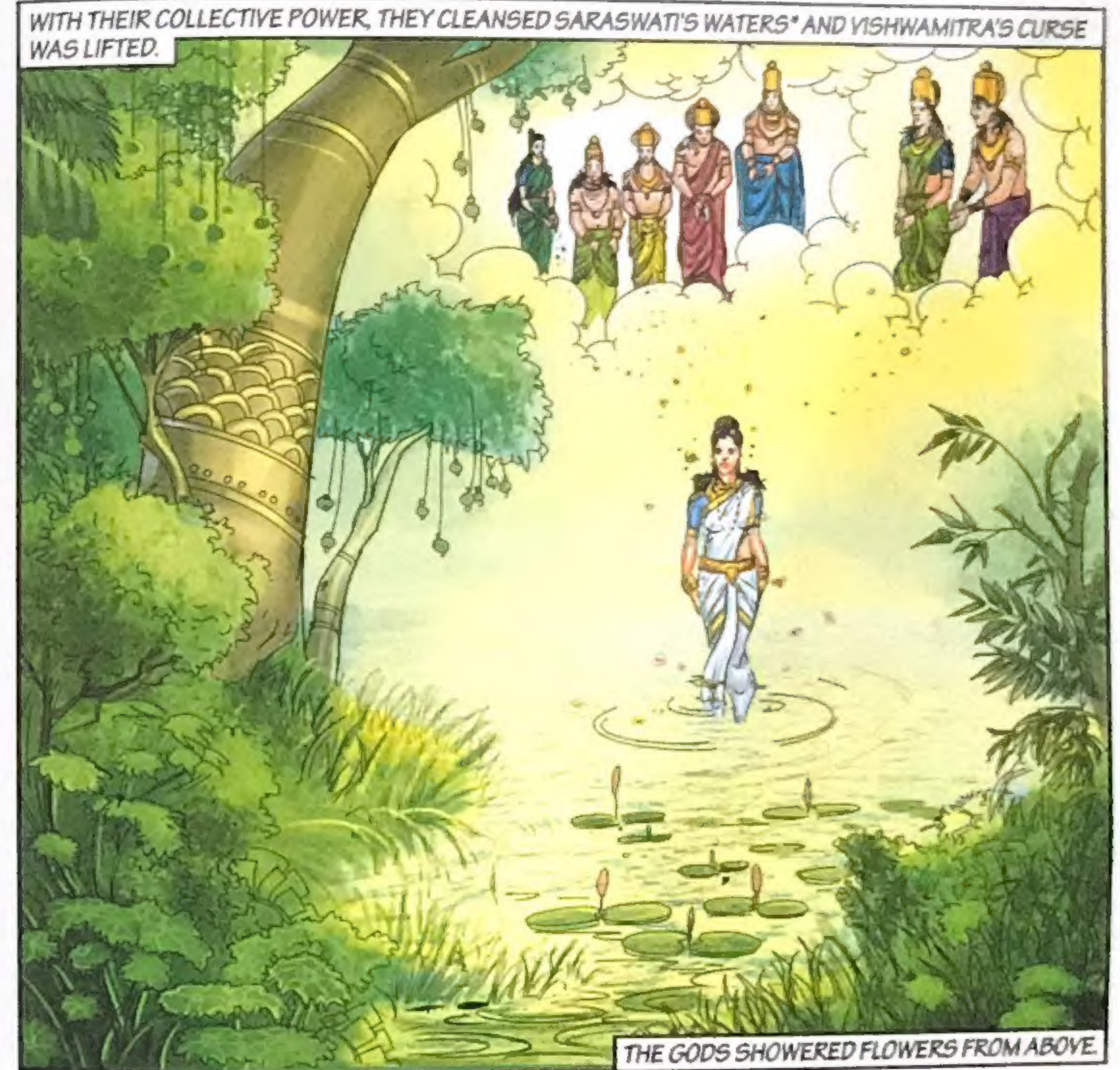
AS HER STORY ENDED -



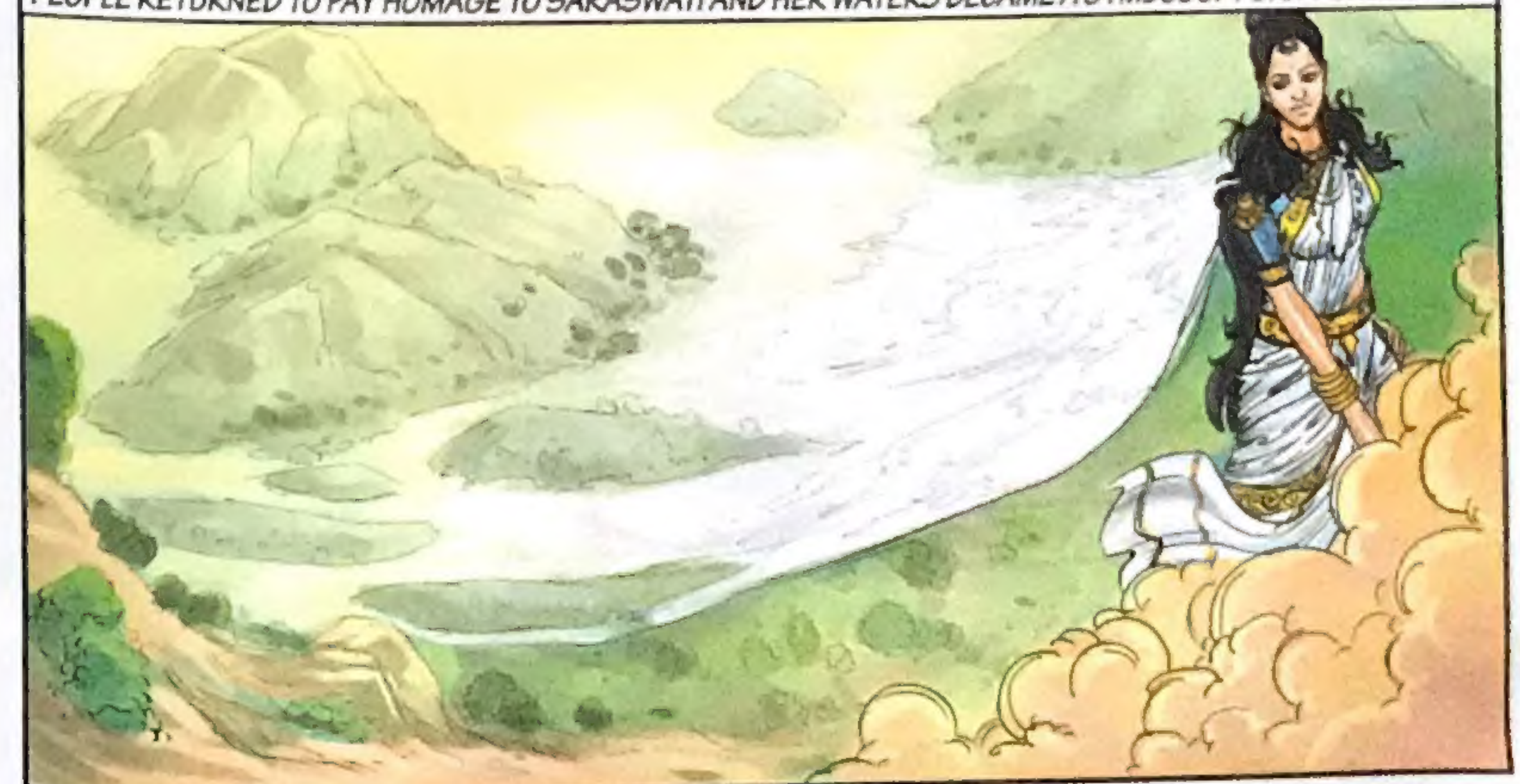
THE SAGES FACED SARASWATI -



WITH THEIR COLLECTIVE POWER, THEY CLEANSED SARASWATI'S WATERS* AND VISHWAMITRA'S CURSE WAS LIFTED.



PEOPLE RETURNED TO PAY HOMAGE TO SARASWATI AND HER WATERS BECAME A SYMBOL OF PURITY ONCE MORE.



*SARASWATI IS SOMETIMES CALLED SHONAPUNYA, MEANING ONE WHO IS PURIFIED OF BLOOD.

MORE ABOUT SARASWATI

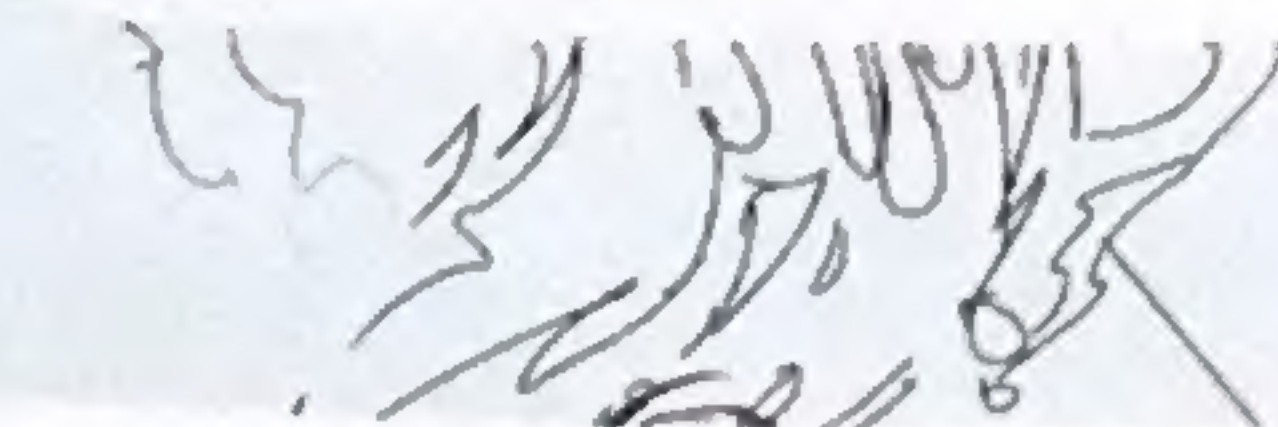
ANCIENT INDIAN SCRIPTURES DESCRIBE SARASWATI IN THREE FORMS - AS A GODDESS, AS A RIVER AND AS SPEECH.

THERE ARE SEVERAL VERSIONS OF THE STORY OF SARASWATI'S BIRTH IN INDIAN MYTHOLOGY. ONE VERSION SAYS THAT SHE WAS CREATED FROM BRAHMA'S MIND. WHEN BRAHMA ASKED HER WHO SHE WAS, SHE TOLD HIM THAT SINCE SHE WAS BORN FROM HIM, IT WAS FOR HIM TO GIVE HER A PLACE IN THE UNIVERSE. BRAHMA CALLED HER SARASWATI AND TOLD HER THAT SHE WOULD EXIST IN THREE FORMS. SHE WAS TO STAY ON THE TIP OF EVERYBODY'S TONGUE IN THE FORM OF SPEECH. ANOTHER PORTION OF HER WOULD STAY WITH HIM, AS PART OF HIS BEING. THE THIRD PART OF HER WOULD EXIST AS A RIVER ON EARTH.



THE RIVER SARASWATI IS MENTIONED SEVERAL TIMES IN THE VEDAS. THE WATERS OF THE RIVER ARE SAID TO BE PURE AND PRISTINE. SARASWATISANGAMA, THE PLACE WHERE SARASWATI JOINS THE OCEAN, IS CONSIDERED HOLY. THERE ARE VARIOUS STORIES IN INDIAN MYTHOLOGY THAT TALK OF THIS PLACE. ONE SUCH STORY IS ABOUT CHANDRA, THE MOON GOD. CHANDRA MARRIED DAKSHA'S TWENTY-SEVEN DAUGHTERS, BUT HE LOVED ONE MORE THAN THE OTHERS. HER NAME WAS ROHINI. HIS OTHER WIVES FELT NEGLECTED AND COMPLAINED TO THEIR FATHER. DAKSHA CURSED CHANDRA TO SUFFER AND LOSE HIS RADIANCE. WITHOUT THE MOON'S LIGHT, THE WORLD FELL INTO DARKNESS AND PEOPLE WERE PANIC-STRICKEN. THE GODS WENT TO DAKSHA FOR HELP. CHANDRA APOLOGISED FOR HIS BEHAVIOUR. DAKSHA FORGAVE HIM AND SAID THAT IF HE TOOK A DIP IN THE SARASWATISANGAMA, HIS GLOW WOULD RETURN FOR HALF OF EVERY MONTH. CHANDRA DID AS HE WAS TOLD. THE WATERS OF THE SARASWATI PURIFIED HIM AND THE WORLD WAS SAVED FROM DARKNESS AND CHAOS.

SARASWATI'S WHITE CLOTHES REPRESENT PURITY OF THOUGHT. HER SIMPLE APPEARANCE SIGNIFIES THE FACT THAT WISDOM AND KNOWLEDGE ARE BEYOND MATERIAL WEALTH. SARASWATI'S ATTIRE ALSO HAS HINTS OF BLUE. THE BLUE REFLECTS HER FORM AS A RIVER AND SIGNIFIES FLUIDITY.



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